

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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OUT IN THE STREETS: A STORY OF HIGH AND LOW LIFE IN NEW-YORK.

By N.S. WOOD, (THE YOUNG AMERICAN ACTOR.)



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NEW YORK, APRIL 12, 1905.

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Out in the Streets

A Story of High and Low Life in New York

By N. S. WOOD (the Young American Actor),

CHAPTER I.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

It was a cold winter night in the city, the streets were clothed in a mantle of white, and the snow was beginning to fall again, lightly at first, but with the promise of increasing in force as the night wore on.

As yet the wind simply moaned as it came up from the river, but before long it would roar and shriek and go sweeping at a gallop through the streets, driving to shelter those who chanced to be abroad.

There were not many people out this cold, stormy night, although the holidays were near at hand, and the brilliantly lighted shop windows were a strong attraction, the bitter air, bleak winds and flying drift keeping most people within doors.

Fortunate were those who had homes to go to on this stormy night, though the rooms might be scantily furnished and many the mouths to be fed. Were it only a shelter from the storm, there was reason to be thankful.

There was one, at least, out in the streets this cold night for whom no cozy home was waiting, for whom no hearth-fire burned warm and bright, for whom no enticing meal smoked on the humble board, for whom no anxious faces peered out into the darkness and the storm.

Out in the streets wandered a scantily clad woman, leading by the hand a little child, buffeted by the wind, blinded by the flying snow, jostled by careless pedestrians hurrying home cared for by none, pitied by none, alone, homeless, friendless.

The stately Cathedral of St. Patrick reared its marble spires to the leaden sky, the snow fell softly upon the roof, whirled merrily about the doors, and was anon glorified by the ruby, golden, emerald and amethystine lights that shone through the windows where saints and martyrs were pictured, beaming down upon the worshipers within, for there were services this night, and many were now scurrying in to escape from the storm.

The poor woman and her child sat down upon the marble steps of an imposing mansion opposite the cathedral as the organ began to peal forth the joyful notes of the Te Deum.

"Oh, mamma, there is a church. Let us go in and hear the beautiful music; it's so cold here," said the child, as the music grew louder.

"Yes," murmured the poor woman, drawing a thin shawl

more closely around the shivering form of the child. "They surely cannot refuse us shelter in such a place."

At that moment a heavy tread was heard close at hand, and a gruff voice said:

"Come, come, move on now. You can't sit here all night. This is no place for beggars."

The woman looked up and saw a policeman glaring down upon her, while he fingered his long night-stick nervously.

"We are not beggars," she replied, indignantly. "I have lost my way and am looking for friends who will shelter me and my poor blind child."

"Blind!" laughed the officer. "A likely story! Well, you can't stay here anyhow, so move on, or I'll lock you up!"

"Come, Florence—come, dear," said the woman, starting up from the step, but sinking down again from cold and exhaustion.

"H'm, drunk, just as I thought!" growled Joe Willard, the policeman, in a heartless tone. "Why don't you go to the station? You'll get there soon enough, I guess."

"What vas der medder oud?" asked a kind voice, as a big, smiling, ruddy-faced German approached the group. "Der ladys was been sick, ain't it?"

"Sick? No, she's drunk," blustered Officer Willard.

"Oh, sir, if you have a kind heart, do not believe him, but assist me in my need. I am looking for my husband's relations, and have spent four days in the search without avail."

"Dot vas a big city, dot Ny Yorick," returned the German. "Dot don't was like some leedle village. Officer, yust hear me once."

The kind-hearted fellow took the policeman aside, put some money in his hand, and said quietly:

"I dinks you made a mistake mit der womans, ain't it? I saw dot she found a place to sleep, right away once."

"Well, see that you do," snarled the brutal officer, as he walked away, twirling his club.

"Chiminies! I spend all dot sausage money vot mein frau gife me," muttered the German to himself; "und now maybe I was had to walk back, but I don't care neider. I was help de poor womans if I don't got sausage for a week."

"Tell me, sir," said the woman, rising, and putting her hand on his arm, "do you know anyone by the name of Norman in the city?"

"Dot vas your husband's name, my poor womans?"

"Yes. I was married to Richard Norman, in South Mitchim,

Maine, seven or eight years ago, and lived happily till our child was three years old."

"Und den he die?" asked the German.

"Yes. Our poor Florence became blind, and then my husband was drowned."

"Was dot so? Dot makes me sorry."

"He went out fishing in a boat with one companion, there was a terrible storm, and two days later the boat was found floating in the bay, bottom upwards, the bodies of my husband and friend being never found."

"Ha, dot makes me sorry some more. I vill see if I could do somedings for you."

"For nearly three years a sum of money was sent to me every month from New York, and upon that I have lived until now. Lately, however, the money has ceased to come, and I came to New York with my child to see if I could not find my husband's relations."

"Und you don't could found dem out?"

"No, although I have searched from one end of the city to the other, and now my money is all gone and I have no place to go to, no shelter for my poor, blind child."

"Nefer mind me, ma'am, I was only a poor Cherman, Fritz Strauss was my name, und I keeps a shoe store down mit Fulton street. Here was money. Go und found lotchings for your selluf, und to-morrow I do someding more for you."

"Oh, sir, thank you very much. I will repay this money, believe me I will. Come, dear, we will—why, where is she? She must have wandered away."

"Ah, dere she is now," exclaimed Fritz Strauss, starting up the avenue. "Ach, mein Gott, der shild vas killed!"

"My child!" shrieked the poor woman.

The blind child was seen at that moment crossing the snowy street, directly in front of a swiftly approaching sleigh drawn by two blooded horses.

At the moment when it seemed that the poor waif would be trampled underfoot, a young man dressed in a fur-lined coat and fur cap suddenly sprang in front of the sleigh and seized one of the animals by the bridle.

"Confound you! Can't you see where you're going?" cried a young man in the sleigh, in an angry tone.

The young man in the street had now checked the speed of the horses, and picking up the child with his disengaged hand, said sharply:

"Can't you see where you are going? In another moment the child would have been under your horses' feet."

"The brat had no business in the street," retorted the other, as he drove away.

The mother of the child, Fritz Strauss, and several persons who had witnessed the incident now came hurrying up.

"Is this your child, madame?" asked the young gentleman, quietly, touching his cap. "I am glad to have been able to do her a service."

"Oh, sir, thank you a thousand times!" cried the poor woman, clasping the blind child to her heart.

"No, do not thank me, but the good fortune which sent me here. But you seem ill and suffering with the cold. Have you no—"

"I have no home—no place to go to in all this great city. This kind German has given me some money to procure lodgings, and— Why, he has gone!"

Fritz Strauss had disappeared, indeed, probably that he might not receive further thanks from the unfortunate woman.

"Well, that may not be enough," said the young man. "Here is more. There is a lodging-house on the side street, three or four squares above. I will see you again in the morning, and arrange to get you permanent employment."

"God bless you for your kindness, sir, and may you never want for a friend. Come, Florence; come, dear."

"Mamma," said the child, "mayn't I kiss the good gentleman for making you happy once more?"

"Yes, indeed you may," answered the young gentleman himself, as he stooped down and kissed the pretty little waif on both cheeks. "Now run along, dear, and save another kiss for me in the morning."

The poor woman and her child then went up the avenue, while the young man crossed the street and entered the elegant mansion opposite the cathedral.

"Mother always told me to assist the unfortunate," he mused, "for as I was kind to others so might I hope that others would be kind to my poor lost sister. God help her this night, wher- ever she may be!"

At this moment the servant admitted him to the house—the residence of Mr. Maberly, the banker—and as he felt the genial warmth of the luxurious mansion the storm without increased in fury, and the cold became more bitter.

"Out in the streets and on such a night!" he thought. "God save poor Helen from such a fate!"

CHAPTER II.

ABNER SNAGGS OF MAINE.

Mr. Fritz Strauss, keeper of a shoe store down by the Fulton Ferry, in the city of New York, had come considerably out of his way to purchase sausages, and it now behooved him to reach home as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Strauss was Irish, and her temper was none of the best in cases like the present, although otherwise she had as warm a heart as anyone.

"I don't know vat makes mein frau vill dink," mused Fritz, as he turned along Fifty-First street, "but I know vat she vill say und vat she vill do just so well as off I heerd her dis minute. Ven I comes in mitout dose sausages and mitout der money she say, 'Fritz, you loafer feller, I broke der broomstick mit your face,' und den ven I toldt her all aboud dot poor womans und der leedle shild she say right avay quick, 'Excuse me, Fritz, you vasn't to blame, aber why didn't you tol me about dot womans first off?'

"Ach, Himmel, dot vas a queer world. I go to shleep mit der elevator cars und go all de vay up to Fifty-first street before I vas know meinselluf, und den I vas try to find some sausage on Fift efeneue. Ho-ho, dot vas a pully shake on me once."

"Vell, I don't vas sorry I met dot poor womans, und gife her dot sausage money; aber, I must get me home yust so quick like I can, or my wife she—"

"Jee whizz, stranger, can't yew see where yew're going? Gosh durn it, yew've knocked the wind clean aout o' me! jee whizz! if yew haven't."

Fritz, in his haste, and half blinded by the storm, had run into somebody, and this was what the latter said when he recovered his breath.

The German had suffered somewhat from the collision as well, and he now drew a long breath and answered:

"Vy don't you was look out for yourself, too, ain't it? You step all over my onions mit your big feet."

"Waal, I beg yure pardon for it. Tarnation big city this 'ere. Heap sight bigger'n my place. Gee whizz, yew wouldn't run into a man there, 'cause yew don't see one every minute. Gee whizz, but it's all-fired cold, mister, and no mistake."

"Yah, I tink so besides. Off you don't want to buy some shoes I go right avay—"

"Hold on, stranger, don't go so fast. Yew know something about this here taown, don't yew?"

"Yah, I know me dot city putty well."

"Waal, jee whizz! Then yu're just the man I want to see. Say, what's yure name, annyhow?"

"You don't vas been a bunco steerer, ain't it?" asked Fritz, with characteristic caution.

"No, sir; yu bet I ain't. I hate them durned skunks wuss'n I do pison."

"Vell, my name vas Fritz Strauss, und I keeps me a shoe store down by—"

"My name's Abner Snaggs, and I came from way daown in Maine. Jee whizz! but ain't it cold? I say, Mr. Straws, if yew—"

"Nein, dot yos not Straws. I tolta you Strauss once—Fritz Strauss down by dot—"

"All right, Mr. Scouse, but if yew'll—"

"Mein chiminies, you vas been crazy once, Mr. Sniggs. Strauss vas my name, und I keep a shoe store down by dot—"

"Whoa there, Dutch! My name's Snaggs, and jee whizz! I don't allow no one tew take liberties with it! But I say, this here storm gets wuss and wuss, and if yew'll show me tew a good tavern I don't mind standin' suthin' hot while I ax yew a few questions."

"Dot vas der best ting I heerd you say already, Sniggs. Come mit me und I show you dot blace right away once."

The storm had now greatly increased in violence, the wind howling and driving the snow in blinding sheets in their faces.

The electric lights cast a weird glare over the scene, and the flitting shadows, seen through the drifting snow, seemed to be seeking a place of shelter as well as the human wanderers caught out in the storm.

A few minutes later Fritz Strauss and Abner Snaggs sat at a table near a cozy fire in a comfortable back room of a drinking place on Third avenue discussing two big glasses of hot whisky punch.

"Naow, my friend," said the Yankee, when he had taken a big swallow of the enticing beverage before him, "I come daown here from South Mitchim in the State of Maine two days ago tew look fur a gal by the name of Helen Norman."

"Yah, I understood dot. Vere you oxpect to find der gell, h'm?"

"Jee whizz! durned ef I know! Yew see, she taught skewl at the little red skewl-house at the Corners, and I think a heap of her—me and my Polly did."

"Yah, you und der parrot was tink der gell yust bully, ain't it?"

"Gee whizz! I didn't say nuthin' abaout a parrot."

"Excuse me, Sniggs, you sayed dot you und your Polly, und dot vas der parrot, don't it, tort a heap von der gell?"

"Gee whizz, Dutch, but yew make me snicker. My Polly is my wife, yew dunner head."

"Oh, you vas got a parrot for a wife. Ah, I nefer heerd off dot."

"No, she ain't a parrot. Gee whizz! Can't yew get nothin' straight? She's a female woman, and she's my wife, and her name is Polly."

"Vell, I understand me dot, but vere vas der gell?"

"That's what I'm comin' tew. Yew see, she was married in the little brick church at South Mitchim, abaout eight years ago, and three years ago her husband, Richard Norman, was drowned, while abaout fishin' in a boat."

"Chiminies!" muttered Fritz.

"Waal, every month since that she's had money sent her from New York. Lately the money stopped comin', and three or four days ago she came on here tew see if she could find her husband's folks."

"Chiminies!" muttered Fritz again.

"Waal, two days after she left the money came, and my Polly she told me to rig myself up fast ez I could and come right daown here and find poor Helen and her blind child."

"Chiminieddies, I saw me dot vomans und her shild not halluf an hour ago already by dot St. Patrick's Church, on Fift efeneue, und der leedle kid was most run ofer by a sleigh wag-on."

"Jee whizz! is that so?" cried Abner. "Child about six years old, woman dark, and not very rugged?"

"Yah, dot vas der vomans, und she tolta me all aboud dot, how der man was been lost mit der boat upside down in der bay und anoder mans, und der money und all about dot."

"Jee whizz! Dutch, it's the luckiest thing in life I met yew, durn my skin if it ain't. Half an hour ago, you say?"

"Yah, aboud dot."

"Jee whizz! And whereabouts did yew say it was?"

"Right befront off dot marble church mit Fift efeneue."

"Jee whizz! Come, show me the place as quick as yew kin. Yu're the best feller I've met so fur, and durn me if I don't ask yew daown to South Mitchim for a month, any time yew want tu come."

"Yah, I show you dot place," said Fritz. "Chiminies! I dink dot vas der luckiest snooze as efer I took, ven I vent avay up to Fifty-feirst street for dot sausage."

"Come on, Fritz, we've got no time tew lose. Jee whizz! but I ain't sorry yew run agin me naow and knocked all the wind out o' me, durned if I am."

Then, out in the streets, into the storm and the darkness, went those two faithful friends of the poor, homeless wanderers, praying from the bottom of their hearts, that they might not be too late to save her.

CHAPTER III.

FATHER AND SON.

Harry Farley, the young gentleman who had saved the blind child from being crushed under the hoofs of the team of spirited horses on Fifth avenue, held a position of trust in Maberly's bank on Wall street, and was considered a young fellow of great promise.

He had worked himself up from an errand boy to a position of responsibility, having the confidence of his employers, and the respect and esteem of all who knew him.

He had been sent for by the banker on an errand of importance, and his timely arrival had been the means of saving the life of the poor blind child.

Having seen the unfortunate mother and child upon their way to the lodging-house, Harry hastened to keep his appointment with the banker, having not a moment to lose.

He was ushered into Mr. Maberly's presence, where he remained for half an hour, discussing various matters connected with the bank.

In the meantime, quite a different interview was taking place in the spacious drawing room of the mansion, one large bow window of which looked out upon the avenue.

Just before Harry Farley entered the Maberly mansion there also entered it the young man who had been driving the horses which so nearly ran over the little blind child, Florence.

He was known as Sydney Heaton, and was the affianced husband of Blanche Maberly, the banker's daughter.

As he entered the drawing room a gentleman of distinguished appearance came hurrying toward him, seized him by the hand, and said:

"Sydney, my son, you have come to save me. I feared you might not. What makes you so late?"

"I am not later than usual, father. I went for a spin on the avenue in the cutter, and by the way, nearly upset some ragged brat or other that had no more sense than to try and cross the street ahead of me. The mother made a terrible fuss, and that

young fellow Farley, down at the bank, snatched her from under the——”

“Yes, yes, any time will do for that,” interrupted Heaton, Sr., impatiently. “What I have to say concerns the present. Sydney, my son, you must marry Blanche at once, to-night if possible.”

“Father, this is so sudden, so unexpected, so——”

“There is every reason for it, and it can be done—it must be done; you must marry Blanche without delay.”

“Well, I intend to marry her, of course, since we are engaged, but why need there be any haste?”

“Sydney, my son, if you would save our poor old father from ruin, induce Blanche to marry you at once, to-night, if she will, to-morrow at the latest.”

“But why must there be so much haste?” asked the younger Heaton, toying with a rose which he had taken from a vase close at hand.

He would have been called handsome, having regular features and a good figure, and well understanding the art of dressing, but there was weakness in his face, despite its symmetrical lines, weakness that would make him cruel or merciless, even wicked, if his love of self were menaced.

In reply to his son's question, Mr. Heaton drew him to the recesses of the bow window, and said, earnestly:

“I stand upon the brink of ruin, of dishonor. Your marriage can avert the danger, providing it takes place at once.”

“What is the trouble?” asked Sydney, quietly.

“I must have money at once, to cover certain transactions of mine, or I am lost. The moment you become the husband of Blanche Maberly you can handle the fortune settled upon her and save me from disgrace. Hesitate, delay the marriage, and we are both ruined, for my name will be dragged in the dust, and the rich heiress will no longer look at you.”

It was the last stroke which told best.

Sydney Heaton's self-love was wounded, and the danger to his own prospects appeared to him more than anything that might befall his father alone.

If the ruin was to become a common one, it behooved him to avert the danger at once.

“Money troubles, eh?” he said musingly, scattering the rose petals over the carpet. “How much do you want? Perhaps we can manage to borrow the amount for a few——”

“No, no, it must not be known to a soul. Besides, the sum is too large. I must have twenty thousand dollars in three days or I am disgraced. We are both disgraced!”

No stronger appeal than that could have been made to the weak, selfish young man, who was to marry Blanche Maberly.

“I will do it!” he said, doggedly. “I will make Blanche my wife to-morrow!”

“Heaven bless you, my boy!” cried the old hypocrite, as he pressed Sydney's hand in both his own. “You have taken a load from my heart, you have saved me from disgrace, from a suicide's grave.”

“And myself from a deuced bad scrape,” thought the son.

“I will leave you now and let you arrange matters with Blanche,” continued Mr. Heaton, joyfully. “Make any excuses you will, but do not leave her until she has promised to do what you ask.”

The father then left the room, and a few minutes later the son was awaiting the coming of the woman he meant to make his wife upon the morrow.

“This settles things for Helen,” he gasped. “Now I am more than ever dead to her. Pshaw! I am safe enough. Dick Watkins is dead or in Australia, and no one else knows my secret.”

A gust of wind drove the snow violently against the pane at that instant, and Sydney Heaton stared back in alarm.

At the same time a beautiful young lady joined the young man at the window, and put her hand in his.

It was Blanche Maberly.

Outside the storm raged more fiercely than before, while within all was bright and beautiful.

A poor woman, standing just under the bow window, with a little blind child at her side, glanced up as the wind swept upon them with pitiless force.

It was the same unfortunate whom Harry Farley had assisted.

She had been turned away from one lodging house and another, because they were full, because she was not well dressed, and for no reason at all.

She had returned to the neighborhood of the cathedral, and had asked alms of the people as they came out from service.

She had been refused, threatened with arrest, and insulted, and now, sick at heart and despairing of finding shelter for her child, stood beneath the brilliantly lighted window of the banker's mansion.

Suddenly, as she turned her head to escape the fierce blast, she saw the face of a man in the window, and at the very first glance she uttered a frantic cry and exclaimed:

“Richard, my husband—alive!”

Then, overcome with emotion, the poor woman fell fainting in the snow at the foot of the steps.

As she lay there unconscious, the poor child bending over her, frantic with grief, Officer Willard returned from a tour of his beat.

“H'm! drunk, of course: just what I said,” he chuckled brutally. “Now I will run you in for sure. Here, get up!”

At that instant Harry Farley came down the steps.

“What are you doing?” he demanded angrily.

“None of your business! The woman is drunk! I ordered her off before.”

The woman recovered as Harry lifted her to her feet, and looked about her in a dazed fashion.

There was no one to be seen at the window now, and the poor woman pressed her hand to her head and whispered:

“My God! have I only been dreaming? Ah! it is you,” she added to Harry. “They would not take me in at the lodgings, and so——”

“Never mind,” interposed Harry. “The matron at the Tombs is a friend of mine. I will take you to her, and she will give you all the care you need. Come, I will get you a carriage. Why, little one,” to Florence, “you are shivering with the cold! Here, take this.”

In an instant the handsome young fellow had whipped off his fur coat and wrapped it around the child.

As he did so the brutal policeman stepped forward, raised his club, caught the poor outcast by the shoulder, and snarled:

“Come on, move on, or I'll——”

Quick as lightning Harry sprang in front of the woman, threw off the officer's grasp, and hurled him backward, exclaiming angrily:

“Touch that lady again, you brute, and I will have you expelled from the force to which you are a reproach and a disgrace!”

CHAPTER IV.

HOW MRS. STRAUSS INTERFERED WITH HER HUSBAND'S PLANS.

When Abner Snaggs and Fritz Strauss reached the cathedral again they found the place deserted, the storm having greatly increased in violence.

“Mein chiminies, Sniggs,” said Fritz, suddenly, “I forgot meinselluf. Dot woman's go mit dot lotching. She don't stay out here mit der church all der vile.”

"Gee whizz! why didn't yew say so? Where is the lodging-house, anyhow? Gee whizz! I reckon I ain't missed her by very much, anyhow."

Had Abner Snaggs arrived five minute earlier he would have seen her enter a carriage with Florence and young Farley, and drive downtown.

She was so ill that the young man did not dare to take her to a hotel, and a station-house was equally out of the question.

Being well acquainted with the matron of the Tombs prison, from whom he had received many benefits when a boy, and knowing her to be kind and generous, he had made up his mind to take the poor woman to her, that the latter might have the benefit of her motherly care and tender nursing.

Had he known the danger that was to arise from this act of kindness he might have hesitated, but no one can know the future, and so he acted as his heart dictated.

While the carriage was on its way downtown Fritz and Abner were searching the streets near the cathedral for traces of the missing woman, but all to no purpose.

"Py chimineddies, dot was nine by the clock once," said Fritz, suddenly, "und my wife dink I was meredered for dot 'sausage money. Better you had come home mit me, Sniggs, und make dot all righd mit de old woman."

"Gee whizz! My Polly she gets riled herself when I stay out late, and then when I gets home safe danged if she ain't mad 'cause I wasn't brung hum' on a shetter, just like she thought I'd be."

"Come, move on, you fellers," growled a voice. "You can't hang around here all night, or I'll run you in."

It was the amiable Joe Willard, who had addressed the pair, as he came along on his rounds.

"Run us in, will ye?" said the Yankee, with a snort. "Waal, jee whizz, if you try it on me yew'll find yew hév bit off more'n yew kin chaw."

"Mine freund," said Fritz, "more better you should mind your own bizness, ain't it? Mr. Sniggs vas a bad mans, und I advise you to go shlow mit him."

"Well, you don't want to freeze to death, do you?" growled Willard, continuing his weary march. "I just wanted to give you a bit of advice, that's all."

Abner declined the invitation of Fritz to spend the night with him, but promised to look him up in the morning, and with that understanding the two separated.

The next day dawned cold and clear, the storm having ceased during the night.

Not long after ten o'clock Fritz Strauss left his wife and eldest son to look after the shoe store, and went to the bank to draw some money.

The worthy German kept his cash in a bank in Wall street, as that was more convenient, besides enabling him to say that he had made so much money on the street recently, which gave him an air of considerable importance among his acquaintances.

Fritz never had a very large balance in the bank, but he thought more of giving his check for five or ten dollars when buying goods as some who can sign their name for thousands.

Going to the bank was an event of great importance to Fritz Strauss.

He wore his best suit of clothes, put on an old light blue overcoat, once the property of a soldier in the United States army, tied a red woollen muffler around his throat, got out an old silk hat, carefully smoothed it on his coat-sleeve, got into a pair of overshoes, and set forth.

When he entered the bank and stepped up to the paying teller's window he saw a young fellow there instead of the old man who usually occupied the position.

"Good-morning," he said, clearing his throat. "Vill you gife me ten—mein chiminies! vas dot you? How you get here?" The young man was Harry Farley.

He had taken the paying teller's place in the latter's temporary absence, his usual position being at one of the desks inside.

"Yes, it is I, of course. How much do you want, did you say?"

"You don't know me once?" asked Fritz, in surprise.

"No, I believe not."

"You nefer sAWN me before, ain't it?"

"Not that I remember."

"Py cheminies, den, I sAWN you once. Don't you remember how you stop dose horses von knocking ofer der leedle kind last nighd, up by dot church?"

"Yes, I remember that."

"Vell, I sAWN you meinselluf. Off you hadn't done dot, I do it meinselluf. I vas mit dot womans yust before dot."

"Why, yes, I remember her speaking of a kind German who had assisted her, but when she turned to look for him he had disappeared."

"Yah, dot was me. I vas in a hurry once. Vere vas dot poor woman's und der leedle shild now once?"

"They are in good hands," returned Harry, quietly.

"Chiminies, I vas glat of dot. I meed a mans last nighd vat know all aboud dot poor womans, und vas looking for her since dree days."

"A friend of hers?"

"Ya, I dink so. Hees name vas been Sniggs, von down der gountry, und he tolts me all aboud der poor womans. He got some gelt vat a mans send her once."

"Well, if he is really a friend of hers, tell him to call at the Tombs. The woman is there at present."

"Ach, chimineddies! you don't vas send dot poor womans to chail once?" cried Fritz, in astonishment.

"No, no; she is in the matron's care. She could not get in at the lodging-houses, and as she seemed very ill I took her to the matron, who is a good friend of mine."

"Vell, I see Sniggs once und tell him vot you tolts me. Dot poor leedle kind! I was feel sorry ven I see her mit der streets out, und all der snow. I lose me a leedle shild just like dot meinselluf once, und esers off I vas had six more, big und leedle, I miss me dot leedle kind, you don't know how."

"You have a good heart, Mr. Strauss," said Harry, looking at the check which Fritz had handed him. "Ten dollars? There you are. Excuse me, please. There are others waiting."

"Dank you," muttered Fritz, putting the money in his pocket. "Off I find Sniggs, I told him all aboud dot."

Then the kind-hearted German returned to his shop, and Harry went on with his work in the bank, both thinking of the poor woman they had so strangely met the night before.

When Fritz reached home, his wife met him with:

"Aha, ye lazy Dootchmon, what kep' yez all day?"

"I was been mit der bank once, Mrs. Strauss."

"Sure, that needn't have tuck ye the hull day. Yez haven't such a poile av munny to ddraw out that it takes yez all the mornin' to count it."

"Vell, I meets a friend by der bank and talks mit him."

"Maybe it was your friend Snaggs from the country, ye ould fraud, bad luck to ye and him!"

"Vat you know aboud Sniggs, my dear?" asked Fritz in surprise.

"I know no good av um, the vilyan. Lave me alone to fix a man like that. Faix, I sint him packin' fasht enough."

"Vot vas dot? You see Sniggs yourselluf once?"

"Yis, I did, bad manners to him, and sint him about his business, too, purty sudden."

"Vere you saw Sniggs?"

"Right here in this house, the robber."

"Good-morning," he said, clearing his throat. "Vill you gife

"Sniggs vas in mein shop. Ach! mein chiminies, I vish I know dot. I vas found out dot womans."

"Yis, I know all about the woman, shame on ye both 'for a pair of blayguards; but I sint Misther Snaggs packin', an' if I hear anything from yez about her I'll pit the print av me nails on yer face that way that they'll be there for a week."

"Ach, donnervetter! you vas make a fool mit yourselluf!" cried Fritz, in disgust.

"I have not thin. Sure the mon was here the mornin' and told me, so innocent like, about a woman ye an' him wor runnin' afther lasht night, and thin axin' me had I seen her yit."

"Vell, go on, my dear," said Fritz doggedly.

"Well, I tould him the woman had gone back home again, and the sooner he wint afther her the betther, and thin I flied open the dure, thripped up his heels and sint him eout head forst into the shnow, and I'll do the same be yez, ye murdherin' Dootchman, av yez go rinnin' afther strange women whin yez have a woife at home! Yis, and I'll get a divorce next, and twinty dollars a week besoides."

Fritz said nothing till he had taken off his overcoat, hat, rubbers, and muffler, and lighted his pipe, when he remarked coolly:

"You vas fery shmart, my dear, in your mind. Dot vas a poor womans mit a leedle plind shild, vot vas looking for her dead husband's friends, oud in der streets. Sniggs knowed dot womans, vere she comes von, und got money for her. Yust now I meed dot nice young feller vot safe der shild und help der womans last nighd, und now you turn 'dot goot Yankee Doodle mans out von de house und he go righd away pack home mit a vild goose chases, und der poor womans in Ny Yorick once. Mary Ann, I vas been ashamed mit you."

The poor woman was crying now, with her apron thrown over her head, and Fritz smoked on in silence.

"Oh, wurra, phwat makes me so jealous?" she said, at length. "Troth, if I'd only known! And now I've put me fut in it. Ye're a good mon, Fritz, but av yez wud only explain matthers a bit before I git me timper up an' not afther, yez'd save yesilf an' me a heap av throuble. The poor darlins! Find them, Fritz, and there's nothin' I won't do for them."

CHAPTER V.

YOUNG FARLEY ASSUMES A GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY.

The afternoon train for Boston and the North that day bore away Abuer Snaggs, while the poor woman for whom he was searching lay dying at the Tombs.

At the same time that the train was whisking through town and city, over field and hill, chased by whirling drifts and attended by myriads of smoke, a quiet wedding was taking place in the Maberly mansion uptown, the contracting parties being Mr. Sydney Heaton and the banker's daughter.

At the same time the Australian steamer leaving Melbourne had among its passengers a certain Dick Walkins, supposed to have been drowned three years before off the coast of Maine in company with a man then known as Richard Norman.

At the same time, too, young Harry Farley buttoned his fur coat about him, turned up the broad collar, thrust his gloved hands into his pockets, and set out to walk from the bank to the Tombs, to inquire after the poor woman in whom he had taken such an interest.

The woman lay on a white cot in the matron's own apartments, while little Florence was at play in another room, so that her childish prattle might not disturb the sleeper.

Some one wished to see the matron, and she called in a woman from one of the wards to watch the patient.

This woman had been detained on suspicion of having stolen some diamonds, but was about to be discharged, her husband having succeeded in satisfying the dealers who had brought the complaint.

The woman was dressed quietly, and would have seemed a lady until one obtained a good luck at her face.

Then no one could have failed to take her for what she really was, a shrewd, bold, crafty adventuress.

"Detailed in the Tombs," she mused, "while my tyrant of a husband makes good the loss that might have been occasioned by my little speculation in diamonds. Why did he not supply me with money then, so that I might not have been tempted? I married him for money and he knew it, and has no one to blame if I resorted to my old practices when he failed to keep me supplied."

"Now he subjects me to this disgrace and threatens to cast me off, like the high-spirited fool he is, as though I cared for that."

"All I want is money, and if I cannot get it from him I will look elsewhere. Perhaps, to save his good name, he will let me have what I want. He must, or I am not the shrewd Kate Pritchard I have always been."

The woman sat silent for a few minutes and then, listening to the regular breathing of the sleeper, her face suddenly lighted up with an expression of triumph.

"This woman is called an unfortunate," she mused. "Such usually have a history. Perhaps it will be to my advantage to know hers."

Arising, the woman moved noiselessly to the sleeper's side, and seemed to be smoothing the pillows, arranging the patient's toilet and otherwise administering to her needs.

What she did do was to dexterously abstract from the bosom of the sleeper's dress a folded paper and a gold locket.

"H'm! here is a mystery to begin with," she whispered. "The marriage certificate of Richard Norman and Helen—H'm! She called herself Mary Wright when she came here, the matron says. Why does she conceal her real name?"

There was a sound outside, and Kate hurriedly concealed the paper and locket.

An attendant led in a little blind child, and then left her, the child sitting on a low stool near the bed.

"Come here, my little dear," said Kate, in wheedling tones. "What is your name?"

"Florence," answered the child. "But you must not talk, or you will wake my mamma."

"No, your mamma is sleeping soundly," answered Kate. "Won't you come and see me?"

"I can't see you. I am blind," said little Florence, simply.

"Blind!" thought Kate. "So much the better! What is your full name, child?"

"Florence Norman. My papa was drowned when I was a little girl."

"What was your papa's name, dear?"

"Richard, and my mamma's is Helen. Do you think she will get better?"

"Yes, dear, of course," muttered Kate, as she drew forth the locket she had taken from the poor woman.

Touching a spring, she caused the toy to open, and beheld the portrait of a handsome young man facing that of a child.

The sight of the man's portrait aroused strange emotions in the breast of Kate Pritchard.

"Why, what does this—where have I seen—surely that must be—yes, I know it! It is the man who is to marry the daughter of old Maberly, the banker!"

The woman's dark eyes glowed with a fierce fire now, and her bosom heaved with passionate emotions.

"So this is the secret!" she hissed. "Sydney Heaton, alias Richard Norman, is about to commit bigamy! It was indeed

lucky that I came here. There is money in this for me. Only let this woman live, and my fortune is made."

At that moment, in the mansion uptown, Sydney Heaton was receiving with his newly made bride the congratulations of a select circle of friends, while the organ played in soft tones the grand notes of the wedding march.

As Kate Pritchard gloated over her discovery a step was heard, and the matron presently entered.

In an instant the woman's demeanor changed.

From the triumphant adventuress she became the humble prisoner, and her look was meekness itself.

"You are at liberty to go as soon as you please, madame," said the matron.

"Thank you. I will wait a few moments, if you please, till someone comes."

At that moment Harry Farley was shown in, and advanced to speak with the matron.

Kate studied his face attentively and thought to herself:

"What has this boy to do with the affair? Is there more mystery here, or have I been mistaken all the time?"

"Good-afternoon, Mrs. Webber," said Harry. "How is the poor woman I brought you last night? Better, I trust."

"No, I fear not. She has not long to live."

"Let me talk to the kind gentleman," cried the child. "I want to kiss him. He told me to save him one for to-day."

Harry caught the child in his arms, and, turning to the matron, said quietly:

"In case the woman dies what becomes of the child?"

"She will be sent to the orphan asylum on the island."

"Suppose I desired to adopt her?"

"You would have to see the commissioners of charities. There is one in the office now."

"Ah! excuse me a moment," said Harry, putting the child down and hurriedly leaving the room.

"Confound his meddling!" hissed Kate, under her breath. "I want that child myself."

"You need not stay any longer, unless you wish to," said the matron, pointedly, to Kate.

At that moment the sick woman suddenly moved, started up in bed and cried:

"Florence, my child, I have found papa! Come—quick!"

The child, blind as she was, flew to the bedside, and was locked in her mother's arms.

In another moment the poor woman fell back upon the bed dead.

"Poor dear," said Kate, "you will come and live with me now, won't you?"

"Excuse me, madam," said the matron, "but you are hardly the right sort of guardian for the child."

"She is my sister's child," hissed Kate, resorting to desperate measures, "and who can have a greater right to her than I?"

"I can!" said Harry, returning at that instant. "The child is in my charge, and I am determined to see that no harm befalls her."

Kate said nothing, but the look she gave Harry Farley boded little good to either him or the child.

CHAPTER VI.

KATE IS BALKED.

Fulton Market presents a busy scene in the early morning, no matter if it be winter or summer.

The long line of stalls with men in white aprons standing ready to serve customers, the swarms of men and women with baskets on their arms, the streams of men and boys hur-

rying to business and the varied sounds within and without, combine to make it one of the busiest places of the city.

The little stands where coffee and cakes are sold do a prosperous business in the early morning, and so do the oyster counters, the newspaper tables and the counters where knick-knacks of all sorts are sold to a gullible public.

Noise, hurry, bustle and confusion characterize the place, and turn where you will, there is nothing else.

Here the passengers are hurrying off the ferryboats, newsboys are yelling, truckmen are shouting, and whistles are blowing; there people are coming and going to market; over yonder women are haggling over the price of corned beef; here someone is excitedly dodging a heavy wagon and trying to catch a street car, while just beyond the cars of the elevated railroad go thundering overhead, adding to the din, already as much as one can stand.

Mr. Fritz Strauss came down to Fulton Market early on the next morning following his visit to Harry Farley, for the purpose of getting the day's supplies.

Just outside the market the worthy man paused to reckon up the things he was expected to buy.

"Let me see once," he mused. "I don't want to forgot nodings. Dere vas sausage und red herring, cheese und crackers, soup meat und vegetables, and two custard pies. Chimines! off dere vasn't enough to make me sick once, I don't said it. Vere I put mein monies once? Swulf, fifteen, dwendy-five, dirty cent. Ach! how I make all dot go in dirty cent? Chimines! I lose me somedings. Mary Ann, she say don't forget dem pies vatefer you do; aber I don't like dot meinselluf. I like me dot pumpernickel—"

Someone collided with the musing German at that moment, and half of the small change in his hand went clattering to the pavement.

"Go on neow, can't yez see where yez are going?" growled someone. "Faix, I'll run yez in if yez obstruet the streets like that."

Fritz turned and saw a red-headed policeman confronting him.

"Vere was your eyes, Irish, dot you don't could saw me?" cried Fritz, angrily. "You make humbug mit me, und I lose my money by you once."

"Go on, go on, and don't be cluttering up the streets, or I'll run yez in. There's too many furriners here already."

"Dot vas no reason vy you lose me my monies, Irish," sputtered Fritz, stooping down and trying to recover some of the lost coins.

"How do yez know I'm Irish?" asked the officer. "Denny Flaherty, my nixt dure neighbor, do say that I luk like a Turk."

That was too much for the risibilities of Fritz Strauss. He laughed till he cried, and then answered:

"By chimineddies, dot was de best shake off de year. You give me a Chrismas bresent off dot, Irish."

Tim, the policeman, did not know that he had said anything funny, however, and was very indignant at Fritz for laughing at him.

"Go on, ye ignorant Dootchmon," he growled, "or I'll run yez in this minyute. How dar yez laugh at an intillijint Irishman? Begob, I'll have yez all—"

"Come, come, officer, that's all right, I guess," said a pleasant voice behind the two disputants. "Mr. Strauss meant no offense, I'm sure."

"Ach, himmel, dot vas dot young feller once," cried Fritz, turning and seeing Harry Farley. "How you do, ain't it?"

"Pretty well, Mr. Strauss, and I have come down early, before going to the bank, on purpose to hunt you up."

"Ach! You don't must call me Mr. Strauss, like you was come to buy a pair of shoes. I was Fritz mit mein friends."

"Well, then Fritz, I want to talk to you about the poor woman—"

"Ya, I tought so. You found out Sniggs once und sent for him?"

"The woman died last night, Fritz," said Harry, solemnly.

"So? und der leedle kind, she don't was die, too?"

"No, she is alive, and it is of her I wish to speak."

"Ach! dot vas a putty leedle shild. It vas been a pity she was blind..."

"She was not always so, Fritz, and perhaps some day her sight may be restored."

"Ya, I like to see dot," said Fritz musingly, as he walked by Harry's side. "Vat you do mit dot shild? Send her mit der country mit dot Yankee Doodle mans?"

"No, I have adopted her, and want you to take her to your house so that your wife can give her the care she needs. You say she is fond of children?"

"Yah, she like dem as nefer vas."

"Well, then, I'll pay you five dollars a week for the child's board, and whatever else—"

"Ach! you make foolishness!" cried Fritz. "Dot leetle kind don't vas eat fife tollars vorth. Mary Ann she took charge of der leedle kind for nodings."

"No, no, I cannot allow that. I must pay you for her board. If you are sure your wife will take her I will go and get her now if you will come along."

"My wife take charge of dot poor leedle kind? Sure, my freund, she treat her just like she was one on her own."

"All right, then, we will go and get her at once."

Harry called a carriage, and he and Fritz drove at once to the Tombs.

A few minutes after they entered the gloomy building they came out again, and with them was the little blind girl, Florence.

A woman in black, and closely veiled, who had been standing on the walk opposite for some time, watching the entrance, smiled bitterly when she saw the carriage drive away.

"So, so, the young meddler has kept his word, has he?" she muttered. "Well, Kate, you ought to be smart enough to outwit a boy like that, especially when there is money to be made out of that brat."

Calling a public hack, Kate Pritchard, who had been waiting for just such an emergency, followed Harry's carriage till it stopped before the German's place of business in Fulton street, near the ferry.

"Trapped!" muttered the adventuress. "Now, leave me alone to secure the child and rebuild my fallen fortunes."

CHAPTER VII.

DICK WATKINS RETURNS AND PROMISES TO MAKE TROUBLE.

It was a pleasant day in June, the air was none too warm for comfort, and the whole city lay bathed in the golden sunshine.

At the Jersey City ferry at the foot of Cortland street a boat was discharging its load of passengers, and carriages and street cars were rapidly filling up as the stream of humanity came pouring out of the ferry-house gates.

Among the last to leave the boat was a thickly-built, heavily-bearded man, wearing a rough suit of blue cloth, coarse boots, and a wide-brimmed felt hat.

The man was known as Dick Watkins, and he had just arrived, overland, from California, whence he had come after a journey across the ocean.

It had evidently been some time since Mr. Dick Watkins had been in New York, for he glanced around with puzzled looks as

he walked along Cortland street in the direction of Broadway. "Changed some since I was here last," he said to himself, "but I reckon I've changed somewhat myself, so that if I should happen to come across them I don't care to know, I ought to pass without recognition."

Reaching Broadway at length, Mr. Dick Watkins glanced up and down that busy thoroughfare, seeing many changes, but being only slightly disturbed by them.

"H'm! there ought to be plenty chances fer a feller like me in this town," he mused. "It has its advantages over Australia, and it beats California all out. The police don't know me, and there ain't no confounded vigilantes to dodge."

Mr. Dick Watkins turned down Broadway by the merest accident, for it was immaterial to him which way he went, but the accident proved of the utmost importance to him.

As he reached Wall street he saw a man jump from a car and turn down the busy thoroughfare, walking briskly, as though in a hurry.

Mr. Dick Watkins uttered a low whistle, crossed the street and followed the man, hanging behind a few yards purposely.

"This is a piece of luck, Dick, my boy," he remarked. "So, so, Mr. Richard Norman is still in New York, eh? There must be some attraction here."

The returned Californian quickened his pace so as to keep nearer to the man he was following, the walk being now rather crowded.

Presently, when he had crossed two intersecting streets, the man ahead paused for a moment and exchanged greetings with someone.

"Good-morning, Heaton. Down early, eh?"

"Yes, I prefer to work in the cool of the day in summer."

The two men passed on and Dick Watkins smiled in an evil way as he mused:

"Heaton, eh, and not Norman now? I wonder what's up? Perhaps nothing, and perhaps much. It has always been my experience that when a man changes his name he does it for a good reason, and a reason, too, that he prefers to keep to himself."

"I never was quite satisfied with being hustled out of the country after that supposed case of drowning down on the Maine coast, but as I was wanted for a little bit of smuggling just then, I did not have much choice in the matter."

"Richard Norman came to New York, changed his name, and has evidently done well, while here am I, fired out of California, come overland on emigrant or cattle trains, and not five dollars in my pocket."

"Things ain't arranged right at all, and I'll have to call upon —hello! Well, he has done well, for a fact."

Sydney Heaton had entered an elegant building, the first floor of which, on one side of the wide vestibule, was used as a bank, the name of Maberly, Heaton & Co., being displayed upon the door in large gold letters.

Dick Watkins saw Heaton enter the bank and disappear in a private office, after greeting the clerks pleasantly.

"Banker, is it?" said the returned Australian. "Changed his name, too. Maybe Norman wasn't his name at all. Well, well, there's a reason for all this, and Dick Watkins is not the fellow to let it go undiscovered."

The man stood irresolute for a few moments, and then, as if inspired by a sudden idea, entered the bank.

"I would like to see Mr. Heaton on private business," he said to one of the clerks, a handsome young fellow, who sat at a window near the entrance.

"Mr. Heaton is engaged at present, sir," was the answer.

"Well, I guess he'll see me," said Dick. "Tell him it's important."

"Will you send in your card, sir? Mr. Heaton will probably tell you when he will be disengaged if your business is important."

"Well, it is. I haven't got a card. Give me a slip of paper. Are you his secretary?"

"No, sir."

Dick Watkins wrote his name in a bold hand on a plain card which Harry Farley handed him, and then added:

"Be sure and tell him it's important, will you?"

Harry went away with the card, and presently returned, saying:

"Mr. Heaton will see you in an hour."

"Tell him I must see him at once."

"Some one to see me, Mr. Farley?" asked an old gentleman just behind Dick, outside the railing.

"No, sir, to see Mr. Sydney, sir."

Dick Watkins started, and looked first at Harry and then at the old gentleman.

"Yes, sir; your son, sir," he muttered, and then to himself: "He's the very image of Dick Farley, eh? By Jove, he looks like— I wonder if there is anything in this?"

The elder Heaton passed beyond the railing into a private office, and Harry said to Watkins:

"Sorry, sir, but Mr. Heaton is very busy."

"I can't help it," said Dick Watkins, doggedly. "I must see him; must—do you understand?"

Harry went away again, and soon returned with the answer that Mr. Watkins was to follow him.

"I don't like the fellow's looks," thought the young man. "He does not appear like a very heavy depositor."

Harry ushered Watkins into Sydney Heaton's private office, the banker saying to him as he left:

"Run over to the Seventeenth National Bank, Mr. Farley, will you, and see if Jerome & Co. have deposited the money due on their note?"

"Yes, sir."

"Farley," said Dick Watkins. "There is a bad name about him."

"Well, what do you want?" asked Heaton, when Harry had gone and his visitor had seated himself in a luxurious, leather-covered arm-chair, with one leg thrown across the other.

"You ought to know that without asking," was the answer.

"What brought you back?"

"A ship and a railroad train."

"I told you to stay away. You have not kept your part of the bargain."

"Foreign parts don't agree with me."

"Well, what do you want now?"

"Money."

"What for?"

"Helping my wife."

"It is immaterial to me whether you hold it or not, Mr. Dick Watkins."

"It is to me. Suppose I tell somebody that one Richard Norman, supposed to have been drowned like that man in Mr. Wiley's boat?" "Suppose I tell that to Mr. Farley?"

Heaton thought for a moment and then said:

"Of course, I'll tell that to Mr. Farley?"

"A good deal, I fear. Perhaps you have not seen my wife? She is in Boston at the moment, who is?"

"No, and I expected her to return to New York from Boston. Farley will return and brought up to the city. Do you know when?"

"Not so far as I know. Anyhow, I want a hundred dollars to-day, whether it is or not."

"Yes, a dollar."

"All right, my friend," said Watkins, smiling. "Perhaps you will get by and by the opportunity to meet with me. Do you know when the train leaves for Boston to-morrow? I think I do."

"I have no opportunity to know that," said Heaton.

"Thank you. I think I will wait until we can make the trip together. It's always best to have company."

With this wise remark Mr. Dick Watkins left the banking-house repulsed, but by no means beaten, if his determined looks were any indication.

"He is stronger than I thought," he mused, "but that even is worth knowing."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RETURNED AUSTRALIAN STRIKES A RICH LEAD.

Wall street has its attractions for women as well as for men, and the proportion of the former who speculate in the rise and fall of stocks is larger than many would imagine.

As Dick Watkins turned up Wall street, after leaving the bank, he presently beheld a well-dressed woman enter a broker's office a few steps in front of him.

"Well, I never," muttered Dick. "There's another of my friends. I wonder if Kate has gone into the banking business."

Taking a position on the opposite side of the street where he could watch the broker's office, Dick waited till the woman came out, and then followed her up to Broadway.

"Well, this is a run of luck," he mused. "First my old chum, Richard Norman, and then my lively sister Kate. Speculating, is she? That'll be good for me if she gets anything out of it."

"They say women make the keenest speculators, and Kate ain't behind the rest. Guess she'll give her dear brother something if I ask her right. I can't live out in the streets, of course, and I could make it hot for Kate if she didn't keep me supplied, and consequently I'll brace her till I can get a hold on Heaton, as he calls himself."

The woman entered a car at Broadway, and Dick Watkins followed her till she reached an uptown street, down which she turned toward the East River.

Dick Watkins was a perfect sleuth-hound, and the woman did not leave his sight until she entered an apartment house below Fourth avenue—one of a long row.

He observed the number, and after waiting a few minutes crossed the street, entered the vestibule, and examined the bells and letter-boxes.

"Pritchard, eh?" he mused, as he found the name. "Taken her former name and living in a flat! What does that mean? Has she given the doctor up, or has he found her out and cast her adrift? This looks different from what I supposed it would."

He then went away and made inquiries at the stores in the neighborhood concerning a certain Mrs. Pritchard, who, he was informed, lived somewhere about.

He claimed to be a friend of her husband's, who wanted to find her and pay her some money due her, and put his questions very adroitly.

In this way he learned that Mrs. Pritchard, a widow, who had paid her bills regularly, was reported to own several houses, and was a most worthy woman.

"Guess she must have changed since I knew her," he thought. "I wonder why in the world she and Dick Watkins are in New York."

"I don't know," he said, "but I have a hunch that she is in New York for a reason."

"I wonder what it is," he mused. "I have a hunch that it is something to do with the Farley business."

"I have a hunch that it is," he said, "but I have a hunch that it is something to do with the Farley business."

He remembered the name of the broker whom Kate had visited, and that gave him just the clew he wanted.

"If she has been speculating, as I suspect, that will be just the thing. That will keep her away an hour at least, and that ought to be long enough for my purpose."

The next thing to do was to find a telegraph office not too near the house, and from here he sent a dispatch as follows:

"Mrs. Pritchard. Have important points. Come at once.

"Ruggs."

Twenty minutes afterwards he saw the dispatch delivered, and in ten minutes more Kate left the house in great haste.

Ten minutes later Dick Watkins entered the vestibule and rang one of the bells at random.

"Who's there?" a voice called down the tube.

"I want to see Mrs. Pritchard."

"Top flat on the left. Can't you see?" and there was a sharp click and the door flew open.

Dick Watkins entered, closed the door and climbed to the top of the house.

The hats were small ones, and Mrs. Pritchard's was on the left, as Dick soon ascertained.

He tried the knob, looked through the key-hole, took out a knife with several blades and a number of queer little appliances and softly whistled.

Then using the heaviest blade as a pry, or "jimmy," he succeeded by a quick movement in opening the door.

The flat had three rooms, a kitchen, a little parlor, and a bedroom, the parlor being in the front of the house.

It was elegantly furnished, and Dick took in the various details as he entered.

There was a lady's writing-desk in one corner, an upright piano opposite, a cozy lounge and a small center-table, upon which stood a handsome lamp.

The curtains, carpets, and furniture were of the finest description, and Dick smiled as he glanced around.

"This is better than a fisherman's hut or a miner's cabin; and now to see where she keeps her cash."

It was no trouble to open the little desk, which had a turn-up lid, and which, when lowered, disclosed a number of pigeon-holes and two or three drawers.

Hurriedly examining the contents of the pigeon-holes, which proved to be mostly letters, some dunning, some very affecting, and some threatening, Dick turned his attention to the drawers.

He found a small leather bag containing a large envelope marked "Heaton Affair," which had as great an attraction for Dick as the sight of a thousand dollars would have had for any man.

The envelope contained papers, one a marriage certificate, the rest newspaper clippings.

"This is a find!" exclaimed the returned Australian, "The marriage certificate of Richard Norman and Helen Farley, and the marriage certificate of a poor woman by the name of Mary Wright, on the same date, and a note in pencil."

"The poor woman has been putting two and two together. Mary Farley is the name assumed for the occasion. Helen Farley married Mr. Heaton at four o'clock. Helen

"Heaton," Kate obtained, "and will be wedded to her on the same day."

"Heaton," Kate obtained, "and will be wedded to her on the same day."

them so can I," and Dick Watkins put the envelope containing the precious papers in his pocket and once more whistled.

"Dick, my boy, you've made a haul, and if you don't profit by it you're a flat," and, closing the desk, Mr. Dick Watkins lighted a cigar, stretched himself on the lounge and proceeded to enjoy himself.

Ten minutes had been spent in this occupation, when a key was heard to turn in the lock, the outer door flew open, and Kate Pritchard came in, her face aflame with rage.

She uttered a slight scream at seeing Dick, and then recognizing him, said angrily:

"So, so, it was you who sent me on that wild-goose chase?"

"All is fair in love and war, my sweet sister."

"How did you get in here?" demanded Kate, furiously.

"By means best known to myself."

"What do you want?"

"Money."

"I have none."

"Borrow some from Sydney Heaton, and give it to me," and Dick laughed.

"What do you know of him?" asked Kate, blanching. "What can there be between you and him?"

"Much. I knew a part of his secret. I have discovered the rest."

The woman seemed to have a sudden intuition, and, running to the little desk, she hurriedly opened and examined it.

"You wretch!" she screamed, "you have stolen my papers. Give them to me, or I will have you arrested as a thief."

"I think not," laughed Dick. "How would you like me to tell the doctor that—"

"That threat is harmless," sneered Kate. "My husband and I have parted."

"Perhaps, then, if I informed the police of New Orleans that Kate Watkins, alias Pritchard, who poisoned her husband in—"

Kate would have fallen had she not clutched at the desk.

"What is it you want, villain?" she scarcely whispered.

"Money," said Dick. "A little will do, for I expect to have plenty soon. I also want your oath to keep silence, and then I will molest you no more."

"How much do you want?"

"One hundred dollars."

"Take it, and never let me see you again, Dick Watkins," cried the adventuress, as she threw a roll of bills in Dick's face. "You have been my evil genius. Never trouble me again."

Dick pocketed the money, laughed lightly, and left the place.

"I have still my trump card left, if I can obtain the child," hissed Kate, when he was gone. "Dick knows nothing of her, but once let me get her in my hands and it will be worth a fortune to give her up."

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. PRITCHARD'S LITTLE SCHEME AND HOW IT WORKED.

Several days after the interview with her rascally brother Kate Pritchard went down to the banking office of Maberly, Heaton & Co. on business.

Prior to her arrival, however, Dick Watkins put in an appearance.

He was better dressed than he had been on his first visit, for he knew the value of a good personal appearance.

Sydney Hea-

the elevated road as far as Fulton street, and descended to the street.

He had hardly done so when a voice exclaimed:

"Chimini! how you was, Sniggs? Dis don't was like de day last winter vat we meet, ain't it?"

"Look here, stranger, my name is Snaggs, and—waal, jee whizz, if it ain't Scouse!"

"Sraum, my friend, you make a leedle mistake."

"Yah, and jee whizz! your wife made a big mistake when she's at me kitin' back to South Mitchim that day, tellin' me that Mrs. Norman le-I went. My Polly, she said she would just like to pull her ears fur it, by gum."

"Yah, dat vos a great mislock, I think so myself, Sniggs."

"Snaggs, you Dutch sassage!"

"Ya, I tink so. Vell, dot poor womans gone die de next day."

"Jee whizz, you don't say!"

"Yah, and Mr. Harry, yet va in der bank he took dat leedle child, I put her to my house to board. Poor leedle kind, she would die, but she was so good like gall already."

"Who told her to bring up?" asked Snaggs.

"Dat Harry Farley, I tolta you. He was in dot bank by Wall street, and he told dat womans dot cold night out in der streets."

"Jee whizz! If that ain't just what my Polly would call the soul of Fre'ndship. Harry Farley, boy? Why, the poor gal's name was Helen Farley. He must be the little brother she mentioned abaout."

"Jee whizz! You don't told me dot. Come mit me right in to my n house. De leedle shild vas dere, und Harry he come in, and he took supper mit us dis efening."

"Jee whizz! Is that so? Then we'll make a reg'lar family party of it. Come on, Jee whizz, let's go in my Polly like this with us? Wed y'all?"

"Ya, I think so much, Sniggs. Chimini, dat vas a pretty kind, I tell you."

A few moments later Harry was shaking hands with Mrs. Farley, and holding Florence on his knee while she told him about the little girl, and how she loved him.

She recognized the kind countryman at once, and Snaggs could not help a smile from the tip of his prattled cap in her innocent way.

He had come with his intent to see Florence and take supper with his wife, but hardly prepared for the surprise of the following.

When Harry was introduced he took Harry's hand, and the two brothers met in the face, and—

"Well, jee whizz! I met at Helen's feet and eyes and all, and to think he didn't know her."

"What do you mean?" asked Harry.

"Well, the poor woman that you found out in the streets and I care on!"

"I care for poor Mrs. Wright."

"Well, she was Helen Farley, and married Richard Norman who lived to our place nigh on to four years, and you're her son, Harry, I see if you ain't."

"And I care for Helen."

"You will be poor till death I ever see."

"I care for her still up to her after all? Thank heaven for that! For Helen, I did my dream that she was the poor woman I met. How do you think I feel? But then I had her in my arms since I was a little boy."

The old hypocrite was one of the hypocrites which Harry had so often met, and he went home with a bitter taste in his mouth and a sad face.

He had to wait for Sydney Heaton, who came to the bank one day, and he told him that he had been to see the old man.

"I care for poor Mrs. Wright, and I care for Helen."

threatening the same thing and promising certain further disclosures which he could not dream of.

In addition to all this, his wife had accused him of coldness, of neglecting her, and of having married her for money alone, and, little love as there had been between them before, there was still less now.

That was not all, however, for the band had met with losses, and a panic seemed imminent, and, to crown all, the elder Heaton came in during the forenoon and said:

"Sydney, I must have money at once, or I am ruined."

"I don't know where you are going to get it, then," said Sydney, impatiently.

"Borrow it of your wife."

"Impossible! She has given me all she will for the present."

"Get it from the bank, then."

"The bank cannot stand it. Several large failures have already weakened us, and to take more would ruin us."

"But I must have fifty thousand or I shall be ruined."

"I gave you a large sum six months ago. What did you do with that? You promised then not to indulge in questionable transactions."

"I didn't come here to be lectured or preached to, Sydney," answered the old man, petulantly. "Do you want to see my name dragged in the gutter? Do you want to see me laid in a suicide's grave? Run to me now, do, and say to you, I tell you you must get me the money or I am lost!"

"How am I going to do it? I tell you the bank is itself in danger."

"Alter young Farley's books, send him out of the country, and let it appear that he has defaulted, anything to get rid of him."

Even Sydney Heaton could not listen to such a proposition unmoved.

"C'mon, but forget it! Change another with my crime?" he gasped, greatly shocked. "I won't do it."

"Is it better that he should be ruined or not?" inquired old Heaton. "He is a young girl can run over his man in a foreign land but you will be ruined."

"I cannot," muttered Sydney.

"You must. It is as easy as telling the truth. A few lines on his books, the money gone from the bank, the thief out of the way, everybody will believe him guilty."

"Except the real criminal!" said Sydney, sitting into a chair and covering his face with his hands.

"Non, non! I have no time for sentiment! I will get him to California on some pretext or another, and then I shall declare him guilty of robbing the bank. He will be arrested unless he takes fright and escapes, and if so we can send him away quietly after the thing has been to make a noise, and we are safe."

The old hypocrite actually smiled as he mapped out this infamous plot against an innocent man.

"Whatever is done must be done at once," continued old Heaton. "In two days it will be too late."

There were other dangers threatening Sydney Heaton, and Harry Farley but all pointed these out to the old hypocrite man.

"Mr. Farley," said Sydney to the young man in the course of the day, "I am much pleased with your present situation. Come to us. Have you any project in life to tell us what the work in the bank might bring?"

"I hope that I may one day go into business for myself," answered Harry. "I have my little niece to support, as well as myself, and—"

"Your niece? Is that the child that I have seen?"

"Yes, sir; she is my sister's child. Her mother is dead, her father too. He was dead when I first met her."

"A bad way to bring up a child," said Sydney.

"It is bad, Mr. Farley. My wife is dead, Helen, and I have

here in the city last winter. She came here to find her husband's relatives, and Heaven guided her steps to me. Since then I have taken care of her poor blind child."

"Very kind of you, I'm sure," returned Heaton. "I think I may be able to better your position here, Mr. Farley," he added. "I will speak about it again in a day or so."

"Thank you, Mr. Heaton," said Harry, as he left the room.

"Helen's brother!" gasped Heaton, when alone. "My child, too? Does Dick Watkins know this? The boy must be sent away, and at once. Better his ruin than mine. Yes, I will do it, and get rid of Watkins at the same time. How fortunate I discovered this when I did!"

CHAPTER XI.

HARRY RECEIVES A SURPRISE.

That afternoon, when the bank had closed, Sydney Heaton called Harry Farley into his private office and said:

"Mr. Farley, I promised you this morning that I would try and better your position in a few days. I have the opportunity of doing so now."

"You are very kind, sir," returned Harry.

"I have some important business to transact in San Francisco, and I wish to be in time when I can meet. I feel that I can place perfect reliance upon you, Mr. Farley, and I will give you the money to you. Do not tell anyone where you are going, and be prepared to leave by to-morrow. I will give you your instructions at that time."

"I will be ready," said Harry, "and again I wish to thank you for your trust in me."

"Attend faithfully to this matter, Mr. Farley," continued Heaton, "for upon your conduct in this will depend your future."

"I will do my best," was Harry's answer, "and I trust that you will have no fault to find with me upon my return."

"Upon his return," mused Heaton, when Harry had gone. "He will never return, and I will be safe."

Harry was very much excited at the prospect of going away, and the advancement in store for him upon his return, provided he had been successful in his mission.

His life had been a hard one, leaving home at fifteen, working his way without the aid of father or mother, and rising step by step until he now held a place of trust and responsibility, and this new opportunity for advancement was therefore hailed by him with no little pride.

He would be enabled to show his employers that he could work hard, that he was not afraid of doing hard work, and that he could rise to fame and prosperity.

It was no wonder that he felt elated, for now he could grasp the reward of many years of patient toil and self-sacrifice to the work given him to do.

After leaving the bank, he hurried around to the home of Mrs. Strauss, to see Florence and tell his friends of his good fortune.

He told them that he was going away for a few days on business connected with the bank, but did not mention where, in the way of explanation that it would probably protect him.

"We will see you when you get back, won't you, Harry?"

"I will be a good girl till then," answered the child.

Fritz seemed to be very much amused at this, and said:

"How you 'spose Harry would like to be sawn eatin' corn beef sandwiches und salt pickles in der cars, my dear? You was make him ashamed mit himself."

"Jee whizz! that won't be so bad as what happened to me," said Snaggs, who was present. "My Polly she put me up a lunch once when I was goin' to Boston, and great guns, ho, ho, ho!"

"Ya, dot vas ferris funny," said Fritz. "But maybe off you tolled us more off dot, we lafe more, ain't it?"

"Why, jee whizz! she put in a lot of apples and doughnuts, and the bottom of the bag busted out and the apples went rolling all over the floor, jumpin' and bouncin' like Sam Hill, and all them high-toned ducks in the car got tu laughin' and, jee whizz! I felt so 'shamed that I didn't let on as the things was mine at all. Jee whizz! but didn't the train-boy have a feast that day! Waal, I jest guess!"

"Sure, I'm not afeard that Mr. Harry will be ashamed av anything I give him," protested Mrs. Strauss earnestly. "Will ye neow, darlnt?"

"Indeed I won't," said Harry, with a smile, "and you are all very kind to think of me. I do not know yet when I am going, so I would not make preparations too soon."

While Harry was bidding his friends good-by, Sydney Heaton was waiting for Dick Watkins in a shaded corner of Union Square.

At last the boy came and Heaton spoke to him earnestly:

"I am going to send young Farley to California, and I want you to follow and see that he doesn't return."

"All right, Syd, I'll see to it. Where is he going?"

"Do you know of a good person to send him to?" asked Heaton, by way of answering Dick's question.

"Yes, an old pal of mine, Rube Sturgis. Give the boy a letter of introduction to him."

"Is he in San Francisco?"

"No, but I know where he is likely to be, and I can telegraph him to go to Frisco and meet the boy. Your letter of introduction can be really the instructions to Sturgis."

"Very well. You must follow and do the rest. I want that child that he thinks so much of taken there at the same time, and you must therefore go later than he does."

"You don't want him killed, do you?" chuckled Watkins.

"No—no, of course not, but I do not want him to return to New York. You understand?"

"Perfectly, and I suppose you'd just as lieve that I wouldn't come back neither."

"It would be as convenient to me if you did not," returned Heaton, dryly. "In fact, I propose to make it worth your while."

"I'll fix the boy," said Watkins. "I know a place in the mountains where he can be kept for years, if you like, and no one be any the wiser. As for the kid, she can be sent down to the Indian country, and no one needn't hear nothin' more of her."

"You haven't got her yet, remember."

"No," said Dick Watkins, muttering, "but I'll get her. Leave that to me, Syd."

"When will you be ready to start?"

"To-morrow night if you say so."

"Make it the next morning. You had better let young Farley have a day's start of you in case anything happens to taint him. He will leave to-morrow at 'ten."

"Very well. You won't forget the money for my trip to what you promised me?"

"We can all live here, and I'll get a place over on Third avenue where we can fix it up."

The two then went away, and they did not return until an hour later, when they came from a little clump of trees, and a shadow of them.

"So, so, that wretched brother of mine wants to get the child, does he?" she mused. "That will interfere with my own."

"It was fortunate that I was in the park, and I overheard them. Heaton must have recognized the child, and, of course, he does not want her around where there would be danger of her being seen by his wife."

"His wife! Ha, ha!" and Kate Pritchard laughed. "She is not even that, for he was still married to the other. Perhaps if I tell her I might make something out of it."

"No," she murmured, after a pause, as she listened to the dying footsteps of the two men. "That will not help me any. I must obtain the child. She will be my strongest weapon against him."

She walked slowly out of the park, but as she reached the street, a new idea seemed to impress her.

"Perhaps, after all, I will make more by espousing the young fellow's cause, warn him of his danger and of the child's, and urge him not to go away. Yes, I will do it, and baffle Dick Watkins yet."

Then, as she hurried to her home, her new resolution seemed to have taken full possession of her, and she appeared to have triumphed over her enemies, her look was so hopeful.

It was no love for the right, or pity for Harry Farley that animated her, however. She thought only of her own gain, and in her heart she was secretly glad that she had been censed if only good were done, a mistake which she was by no means the first to make.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT FOLK WANTED TO SAY AND WHAT THEY DIDN'T SAY.

The station was a great depot of people, and a great display of activity and bustle.

People were buying tickets, others were crowding around the doors waiting for them to open, friends were exchanging parting handshakes and good wishes, cabmen were shouting, and, dilatory travelers were hurrying in with boxes and bags, and the din was terrible.

"Jee whizz! I wonder if I'm to see you again?" said Abner Snaggs, as he came in, wiping his perspiring forehead with a red bandanna handkerchief. "That gosh-blamed watch mine had tew stop, and I'll bet a cookie that that blasted timepiece is gone an' I hain't had time tew say good-by."

He looked around the room, wiped his face again, and pushing his way through the crowd around the door, found the official he found there:

"Mister, has the train to Chicago gone yet?"

"I don't go for a month yet. Go sit on a block of ice and cool country," was the ungracious retort of the bluecoat.

"Gotter wait a month, hev I?" grunted Abner, as

he turned to go. "Waal, that feller is cool enough. I swan. Jee whizz! that beats all the slow trav-

"A cool month?" he said, as he turned back to Abner.

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before the train starts he'll be so befuddled and confused that I can manage him and the old woman well enough."

"Neow, thin, where's Fritz?" cried Mrs. Strauss, as the last passengers began to hurry in. "He'll miss seeing Masthur Harry."

As she spoke, Fritz and Abner came in, having slipped away while Harry had been speaking to her.

Fritz appeared to have been drinking again, for he staggered considerably, and a large and heavy market-basket that he carried did not appear to steady him materially.

"Dere vos dot basket off lunch," he muttered, as he placed it on the floor. "I dink you must tort Harry was going away for a week vere dere don't was some lunch counters, ain't it?"

"You are very kind, Mrs. Strauss," said Harry, smiling and blushing, "but really—"

"All aboard for Chicago, St. Louis, and the West!" shouted the man at the door.

At that moment a lady, elegantly dressed, but closely veiled, came hurrying forward, seized Harry's hand, and exclaimed:

"You must not go on this journey—it will be your death. Sydney Heaton is a wretch and is plotting your ruin. Stay here while yet there is time. Go, and you are lost."

"Madam, I do not know you nor understand your strange warning," answered Harry coldly. "Why you should seek to have me neglect my plain duty I know not, but—"

"I tell you you must not go!" cried the woman, seeking to detain him by force.

The violent effort caused her veil to fall from her face, and Harry recognized her as Kate Pritchard.

"Ha! it is easy to see why you wish me to remain," he said, scornfully. "Good-by, Florence, good-by, friends," he added, hurriedly turning to his companions. "Ah, there goes the gong. I must be off."

He hurried through the door, but even then Kate would have detained him.

She sprang forward, but, at the same moment Dick Watkins hurried up and cried gruffly:

"Arrest that woman! She is a pickpocket!"

Mrs. Strauss screamed, Fritz fell over the basket of lunch, Kate Pritchard struck at Abner as he tried to detain her, an officer came running to the scene, and all was confusion.

When the bustle was at its height, the train bearing Harry Farley being now at full speed, Dick Watkins slipped in, seized Harry in his arms, and a half a mile off in the darkness, threw her into a closed carriage, and drove rapidly away.

His plan had succeeded better than he had hoped.

CHAPTER XIII.

HARRY HEARS UGLY RUMORS AND CALLS ON MR. REUBEN STURGIS.

Harry Farley was whisked away on the fast express, and ignorant of the character of the villainy that had been used to get him away.

His heart was light, and the thought of his improved prospects made him as happy as the day was long, while never an idea of danger crossed his head.

He had many friends on the journey, and all whom he met chattered him on of the great things you always follow when you travel.

No natural anxiety or fear no fears gave him pain, and as the days passed and he neared the end of his journey his spirits grew lighter and the chances for bettering his condition were more and more numerous.

When he reached the railway across the Continent, Dick Watkins, who had been sent on to meet him, was waiting for him.

He had told little Florence that he was taking her to see her grandmother, and as the child often asked when they would reach the place, and in how many days they would be, the man resorted to opiates to keep her asleep and prevent her from talking too much.

It did not seem advisable that too many people should see her, either, and whenever it was possible he kept her out of sight, putting her to bed early and not allowing her to leave till late.

At last Harry arrived at San Francisco late in the afternoon, a week after his departure from New York.

As he left the train he bought a newspaper from a boy and almost the first thing that he saw was the following:

"HEAVY DEFALCATION."

"New York, July 20.—The private banking house of Maberly, Heaton & Co., on Wall street, has suffered a great loss from the defalcation of one of its most trusted employees. The loss will reach nearly \$300,000, mostly in cash and negotiable securities. The thief has absconded, presumably to Europe, though some of the detectives think he has gone to California, and the police of San Francisco have been notified. The defaulter's name is Henry Farley, commonly known as Harry. He is a young man of pleasing address, and until now has born an excellent reputation."

Harry read the article to the end without stopping, and seemed scarcely to breathe.

"What does it mean?" he muttered. "Some terrible mistake has been committed. What ought I to do? Telegraph to New York or return by the next train?"

He walked along, absent-mindedly crushing the paper in his hand and trying to think what was best to do under the circumstances.

"There are my instructions," he mused. "I had better call on Sturgis at once and explain. God knows I am innocent of this charge. Perhaps I had better give myself up, return to New York and demand the proofs against me. First of all, though, I must see Sturgis and find out what he knows. Perhaps it is all a mistake."

The address given Harry was a small hotel in the business part of the city, and after making a few inquiries he found his way there and asked for Mr. Sturgis.

In a few minutes he was shown to a room on the third floor, and found a tall, heavily-built man, dressed in a suit of shaggy, brown cloth, awaiting him.

"My name is Farley," said Harry, "and I am from Maberly, Heaton & Co., New York. This is Mr. Sturgis?"

"That's my name," said the big man. "Take a seat. I heard you were coming," and then he arose and locked the door.

"Why do you do that?" asked Harry, laying the packet he had brought on the table.

"I'm glad you have it, but you'll have to tell me," said Sturgis, with an unpleasant chuckle by way of reply.

"Yes," said Harry, coloring, "and I pronounce the statement concerning me to be a lie."

"Well, I'm not willing to tell the truth, I know that you're lying, but I'll tell you the present," said Sturgis, "and that's why I locked the door."

"When was this statement first made public?" asked Harry.

"Only to-day, I believe. The New York papers will have more of it. They ought to be here in a day or so, and I'd advise you to skip."

"I have done nothing that I do not deserve," said Harry, "and I shall stand on my rights."

"I'll read the instructions,"

er. Anyhow, Dick'll be here then, and we can get him away quiet."

Sturgis then lifted Harry from the floor, and placed him on the bed, where he lay like one dead.

All night he lay unconscious, and in the morning Sturgis received a note from Watkins telling him to come at once to the old place, if everything was all right.

The man took Harry from the house in a closed carriage, hurried him away on a train, and made all haste to reach the rendezvous in the mountain.

He said that the boy was very ill, and kept him out of sight as much as possible, fearing that he might recover and make trouble.

At a lonely station on the road he left the train, taking Harry with him, the young fellow just able to stand, but feeling terribly dazed.

Sturgis borrowed a horse from a man at the little station, a fellow as evil-looking as himself, mounted, placed Harry on the saddle in front of him, and rode off.

At the end of an hour's ride he halted at the foot of a precipitous path, and dismounted.

The scene was wild in the extreme, and was a fitting place for outlaws like Watkins and Sturgis to hide in.

It was a small, deep valley shut in by precipitous cliffs, a mountain torrent came tumbling down from ledge to ledge into a deep pool overhung by rocks, whence it glided away into some underground passage and was lost to sight.

At the height of twenty or thirty feet from where Sturgis had dismounted, the stream was spanned by a rude bridge of a single log, to which approach was had by a steep and winding path.

The trees arched overhead, and cast a deep shade upon the path; at a higher elevation it was more open, and from the little ledge a view could be obtained of the distant mountains.

As Sturgis dismounted Harry appeared to recover his senses, and gazed around him with a look of surprise.

He saw the evil look on the face of Sturgis, who was now dressed in the rough garb of a miner, noticed that his own clothes had been changed, and saw where he was in an instant.

"There has been treachery here!" he cried, springing from the horse. "You have betrayed me—you have—"

Then, as Sturgis laughed cruelly at him, Harry suddenly broke off and sprang savagely at the outlaw's throat.

It was no match for the burly outlaw, reared in the mountains and accustomed to all manner of hardships.

Harry uttered a fierce oath and hurled his assailant from him, in a roar.

Harry rolled, fell to the ground, struck his head upon a rock, and lay unconscious.

"Young fool!" growled Sturgis. "Gee, he'll know enough now to be of no gain. I shot 'em! I've killed him, and I don't care if I have."

He picked the limp body from the ground, threw it over his back and toiled up the steep ascent to the little ledge.

On the ledge he followed a narrow path between enormous rocks until he presently came to a solid oaken door set in a wall of solidly hewn stone.

The place was dark, long deserted, and dimly lighted by a single candle, which cast a minute of light about, but now given up to the darkness but little better than they.

The walls were thick, the rooms small, many of them quite dark. The door was broken in at several places, the glass broken, the glass remaining to the touch, and the door itself partially broken.

Sturgis passed the candle over the floor to see if it was

ticed window nearly covered with vines served to further lighten the gloom, although not to any considerable extent.

Pushing aside the door, the outlaw threaded his way through several narrow passages, and at last came to a room much smaller than the first, where he placed his burden upon a pile of moss in one corner.

The same evidences of decay showed themselves here as in the outer room, although it was more secure.

From one corner of the place, where they lay rusting and gathering mold, Sturgis brought out some shackles and a heavy chain, and bound the unconscious boy hand and foot.

"That'll keep him from getting away," muttered the man, as he sat down on a stone bench and proceeded to light his pipe.

The rays of the declining sun entered the broken window, where a few panes of stained glass yet remained, and a broad patch of red light fell across the man's face and chest, as though he had been stained in blood.

"Wonder where Dick is?" he mused as the red-tinted smoke wreaths arose above his head. "Time he showed up, I reckon."

"Well, Rube, you've fetched him, have you?" said a voice, and looking up, Sturgis beheld Watkins looking in at the broken window.

"Yes, I got him, Dick, but he cut up nasty, and I had to give him a crack on the head. Reckon he won't get over it very soon."

"You hain't gone and killed him, have you, Rube?" growled Dick.

"Will it make any big diff if I have?" asked Sturgis, eagerly.

"I reckon it will; but come out here, I want to see you. I've got the kid to look after. She's in the room where Dead Gulch Bill passed in his chips a year or so ago; reckon that's safe enough."

"The door can't shut, that's all."

"Ha, that's nothing. The kid is blind."

Sturgis now left the den where Harry lay and joined Watkins in the outer room, a pleasant fire now burning on the hearth and serving to make the place more comfortable.

Here the two outlaws ate their supper and smoked their pipes, while Harry still lay unconscious in his cell in the old mission, happily unconscious of the fate intended for him.

CHAPTER XV.

DICK WATKINS COMMUNICATES NEWS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.

The moonlight streamed in at the window of the cell in the ruined mission, and fell across the face of Harry Farley as he lay stretched upon a pile of moss.

He presently opened his eyes, sat up, and gazed around him in surprise.

The chains upon his wrists and ankles rattled as he moved, and he stared to his feet in alarm.

"What place is this? Chains? An old ruin? What does it mean?" he murmured.

He put his hand to his head, which ached severely, and gradually the knowledge of his position forced itself upon him.

"Yes, I remember," he whispered. "The journey, the a-sation, the man at the hotel, the wine—drugged, it must have been—then a time of confusion, then the struggle. Chains? I am a prisoner then, but where, and in whose power? There is a mystery here which I must unfathom."

He walked to the window, and looking in a fit of vision, saw the moonlight of day with the sun behind it a few wavy

ing branches and a mass of dark shadows, and hear the sound of waters falling, and that was all.

As he stood there gazing out upon the night, the cool air bringing some slight relief to his aching head, he heard the sound of boisterous laughter and then the voices of two men in conversation.

"Well, if he cuts up nasty agin there's only one way o' quietin' him, I tell you."

"Now, now, don't ye be too obstreperous, Rube. He's wuth more alive than dead."

"Maybe so, if he don't get too spunky."

"I tell you he is. I can get more money out of Dick Norman if he's alive than I kin if he ain't."

"Richard Norman," thought Harry. "Why, that is the man whom my poor sister Helen married. What has this man to do with him?"

"Well, I've had trouble enough with him already," said Sturgis, "and I won't stand no nonsense."

"That is the man I met in San Francisco," mused Harry. "The other is Dick Watkins, who called on Mr. Heaton several times at the bank."

"Well, we'll have to get him to sign the paper," said Watkins, "and then Heaton is clear, and the boy can go where he likes."

"Heaton is clear," repeated Harry. "What can he mean by that?"

The voices had ceased, and at this moment the door grated on its hinges, and Sturgis entered.

"Oh, you've waked up, have you?" he asked in surly tones. "You'll want your supper next, I suppose?"

"Why am I chained here like a dog?" demanded Harry.

"To keep ye out of mischief, and to prevent the officers from catching of you. You must ha' forgot the piece in the paper you read in Frisco?"

"I have forgotten nothing. I have not forgotten that you are a treacherous dog, that you lied to me, that you drugged and carried me away from the city, that you prevented me from running away with my friends in New York."

"That's all right. I kept you out of harm's way. I didn't want you arrested."

"I could have proved my innocence easily enough. What have you and Dick Watkins in common? I know that he is a scoundrel, and I believe that you are another."

"Cuss you!" growled Sturgis, rushing at Harry with uplifted fist, "I've a mind to brain ye!"

"Take care!" cried Harry, springing back, seizing his chains in his hands and brandishing them above his head. "One step and I will dash your brains out!"

Sturgis paused, while an angry light came into his eyes.

"Don't you come near me," said Harry, still on the defensive. "I know you to be a treacherous hound, and I would soon kill you as have you come near me."

"I'll shoot ye as quick as look at ye, and I will if ye go runnin' away with me. There's none o' yer friends within a hundred miles and ye want to go easy, pardner."

"Now, now, what's all the fuss about?" asked Dick Watkins, finally entering the room.

"Nuthin'," growled Sturgis, "but if the kid is wise he'll take his time and not go callin' up mighty, a-threatenin' them that's friendly him."

"I'll have supper Rube," said Dick Watkins. "I want to talk with the young feller."

They were silent, and Dick, sitting on the stone bench,

"I'll tell ye what I think about the truth. Let's have a quiet talk, Rube. Do you know why you've been brought here?"

"No, though there is some villainy at the bottom of it."

"Well, you're here because it suits somebody to have you here, that's why. Shall I tell you how you can get free?"

"Well?"

"By signing a confession that you robbed the bank of Maberly, Heaton & Co. of three hundred thousand dollars."

"Sign away my honor!" cried Harry. "Confess to having committed a crime of which I am innocent? Never! I would die first!"

"Take care," growled Watkins. "It may come to that. Sign the paper and you are free to go where you will—China, Australia, Europe, South America, anywhere but the States."

"I will never sign it!"

"You better think it over," said Dick Watkins, doggedly. "You might as well understand matters. You ain't wanted in the States, and if necessary to keep you out your life will be taken. It means ruin to Heaton to have you return. What does it matter to you? Go somewhere else, change your name, and start afresh. You are young, and won't mind that."

"So my mission to California was all a blind, a plot to get me out of the way and cover up Sydney Heaton's rascality?"

"Well, that's about the size of it. You're in a tight place, young feller, and the only way out of it is to sign that confession. I've got it with me, and pens and ink, so now—"

"You need not trouble yourself," said Harry, firmly. "I will never sign it!"

"I'll give you till to-morrow," muttered Watkins, "and then, if you won't listen to reason, I'll send you for a walk with Sturgis, on the bridge, in the moonlight."

"Well?" asked Harry, coolly.

"Do you know what that little bridge spans?" asked Watkins pointedly.

"No."

"It crosses a mountain torrent that runs under the rocks and empties leagues away into the river."

"It runs with lightning speed and is called the Devil's Mill Race. Whatever falls into the pool below is carried away, never to be seen again. Do you want to take a trip to destruction by that route, or don't you?"

Harry shuddered, and then recovering himself, asked quietly:

"Is it far from here to the bridge?"

"Far?" laughed Watkins. "Oh, no, it ain't far. Out of this room into the passage, straight ahead for a dozen yards, then into another room, and so out upon the rocks, and the bridge is right before you. No, it ain't far, not near so far as your journey to the next world will be if you don't sign that paper."

"Which I will never do!" retorted Harry.

"I won't take that for your answer now," retorted Watkins. "Better think it over. I'll give you till to-morrow."

"I shall not change my mind," said Harry, firmly.

"We'll see, my lad. You'll change your tune when you go whirling down the Devil's Mill Race, and then it'll be too late. Good-night."

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. ABNER SNAGGS COMES TO A SUDDEN DETERMINATION

Mr. Abner Snaggs was reading his paper one morning, days after the departure of Harry Farley for the West, when he came upon a certain item which riveted his attention.

"Just what I don't know," he said, sitting on the floor. "That boy hasn't got a cent."

"more'n I have. Jee whizz! I'll go down tu the bank this minute and see about it."

Then he put on his hat and rushed off to the bank without stopping to finish his breakfast.

When he arrived at the place he found a notice on the door stating that the bank would be closed for a few days until its affairs could be straightened, and that it would probably resume business shortly.

"Jee whizz! that's a pretty howdy-du," he muttered. "I'll bet my old butes the boy didn't have nothin' tu du with it. Gosh hang it, I've gotter see somebody, blamed if I hain't. I don't care if with what them newspapers says."

The janitor presently appeared, and Abner took him by one of the buttons and said:

"See here, mister, I want tu see somebody what belongs to this bank."

"You can't do it," said the man.

"Waal, I must see 'em. Hain't Mr. Heaton nor nobody come in yet? Jee whizz! this is mighty important business tu me, this is. I don't believe Harry Farley took that money any more'n you did, no, and jee whizz, not as much."

"I don't know anything about that," said the man, trying to get away. "But here comes Mr. Heaton now. You'd better tell him about it."

Abner turned and saw a man coming up the steps.

"Jee whizz!" he exclaimed.

"Good morning, Mr. Heaton," said the janitor, touching his cap.

Abner turned forward and exclaimed excitedly.

"Jee whizz! Dick Norman, is that you? How you havin' it!"

"My name is Heaton," said the other, trying to pass.

"Waal, jee whizz! It may be Heaton now, but it was Dick Norman three years ago, and you was the husband of Harry Farley, that boy's sister, and you needn't tell me——"

"Stand aside, sir. I do not know you," said Heaton coldly.

"You, you do, and I know you. Jee whizz, I du. What you done with that boy, Harry Farley?"

"I hav' done nothing with him, but the officers will do the same with the young scoundrel if——"

"Now, jee whizz, you know you're lyin', and so du I. The boy never took no money. He ain't that kind; but a man what'll run away from his wife, and change his name, will rob a bank, and put it on someone else, he will, jee whizz!"

"What do you speak to me like that?" snarled Heaton. "Dickie will you call me a——?"

"So you think the boy has run tu California, do you?" asked Mr. Heaton.

"If you have come to Heaton for all I know or care," retorted Heaton.

"Well, as you'll I'll tell you what I know or my name isn't Abner Snaggs, and you're that Richard Norman. You don't know me, but I do, for I'm a right full-bleeding Norman, and I'll tell you what I know about him. Get out of here, you——"

by this time, and now an officer stepped up to Abner, put a hand on his shoulder, and said:

"Here, here, yez mustn't go to raisin' any ructions here, me mon. If the bank owes ye anny money, ye'll get it if ye'll be patient and hould yer jaw a bit."

"All right, Irish; you needn't tease yureself over me. I hain't raised no fuss here, and I ain't a-goin' ter, but you'll see the fur fly some day, jee whizz, you will."

Then Abner left the bank and hurried around to the store of his friend, Fritz Strauss.

"How du, Dutch?" he said breathlessly. "Seen anything o' Florence?"

"Nein, I don't saw me noding, und Mary Ann she was been cry her eye oud mit dot. Der bolices don't could found yust so much as a hair off der poor leedle kind, und we was all crazy like der dooce. I don't drink me some more beer nefer once after dot. It was me vot lose der poor leedle kind, yust cn-aggount I get me drunk dot day."

"Yu hain't heard nothin' abaout Harry, I don't suppose?" asked Abner quietly.

"Nein. I don't heerd me noding."

"They say he's run away with the bank's money."

"Shtop a leedle!" cried Fritz, springing up. "Off you come mit my house to aboose dot boy you better go avay once, Sniggs. I don't heerd a word against dot boy once."

"That's right, Dutch, you stick up for him. I hain't said he run away with the money. Jee whizz, no! it's them pesky skunks up there what say it. But, jee whizz! I'll make 'em prove it, or my name ain't Abner Snaggs."

"Who say dot der boy run away mit der bank, Sniggs? I broke dot snoozer's face?"

"They say so at the bank, and the papers say it; but, jee whizz! I don't believe it. It's my opinion that them what's stole the poor blind gal has suthin' tu du with spreadin' these lies about Harry Farley, and if you catch one you'll catch the other."

"Phwat's that about Harry?" asked Mrs. Strauss, coming into the room at that instant.

"They say he's stole all the bank's money and gone tu Call-forney."

"Oh, musha! and he tould me himself he wor goin' to Call-forney, and axed me not to tell," cried the poor woman.

"Jee whizz! is that so?"

"Was you tolts der troot, Mary Ann?"

"Yis, it's thtrue as I'm standin' here; but I won't believe he shtole the money, not if all the papers in Ameriky said it."

"Gone tu Call-forney, hey?" repeated Abner. "Then, jee whizz! I'm goin' there tew."

"You go mit California?" cried Strauss.

"Yas'r, I'm goin' tu Call-forney. If Harry said he was goin' he's went, an' it was tu Call-forney that he said they could steal the money that he was sent off. Yu don't find fules down in Maine, because the country's so broad that if you has to travel to get there and stay out there, and I'll take it again and again, that's the truth, I'll jee whizz!"

"What you doin' to be comin' down here?" asked Mrs.

bank?" asked Fritz. "Don't he was come back pretty quick?"

"Waal, it's my opinion that they won't let him come back, and that's what I'm goin' out there fur. I loved that boy's sister, Fritz, and I ain't goin' tu see no harm come tu him. Why, if I did my Folly wouldn't never look me in the face agin. Gee whizz, she wouldn't."

"Faix, Mr. Snaggs, ye're an cigar, if yez are not good-lookin'," said Mrs. Strauss, "and I hope ye'll find the bye and bring him back safe, yis and the poor little gell too, for me heart is sad aither the darlint."

"Never fear abaout the littic gal! Mrs. Strauss. That 'ere pesky skunk at the bank can tol' me where she is, I'll bet a cooky, and he's gotter, or my name ain't Abner Snaggs."

"I miss me dot leedle kind like eferydings," muttered Fritz. "I was got me blendy more off my own, aber I don't could sleep since dot shild go avay."

"Never yu mind, Fritz, we'll get the gal back, but fust we've got to get Harry, and, jis' what! I'm goin' tu find him if I hev tu walk from here to Californy and back."

Abner was as good as his word, and started for the West that very afternoon.

CHAPTER XVII.

DICK WATKINS LEAVES CALIFORNIA.

The moonlight shone on the windows of the old mansion, and Harry Farley lay on his bed of iron, gazing over his shoulder.

He had slept but little over in the morning, but it could be nothing but the excitement of the night.

"I will not sell myself so cheap," said Harry. "I can die, but I will not dishonor myself."

At that moment he heard a light step on the rocky floor and looked up.

At first he could scarce credit his senses, and thought he must be dreaming.

Standing in the moonlight was the figure of a child, dressed in white with a mass of golden hair streaming over her shoulders, and her arms outstretched as though seeking aid. She moved a pace, and the moonlight fell upon her face.

Harry was upon his feet in an instant.

"Florence!"

He sprang forward, seized the child in his arms, and caught her to his breast.

"I'll be honest and true to you, and you have to live for me. I think I will never see you again."

"The darlast I have seen I you, and I will take you away from this place. What do you say?"

"A darlast who will you go to the next to me, and the last to see me, in a full long time, and I don't care about it."

"You are bein' a fool?"

"I said the same to you all day, and they said the same to me all day. If they kept me away from New

"They said that?"

"Yes; and Dick said that Mr. Sydney Heaton would pay them for keeping you away, too."

"Sydney Heaton?"

"Yes, but Dick said he had another name."

"He has?"

"Let me see, it was Richard—Richard—"

"Richard Norman."

"Yes, Richard Norman."

"Her father," murmured Harry. "So, so, he would have killed both brother and child."

"Did you come here to take me away, Uncle Harry?" asked Florence.

"Yes, we will go away soon, but you must be patient a little while, darling. These men are wicked and will try to keep you here."

"But God will not let them, will He, Uncle Harry?" asked the child, innocently.

A flush arose to Harry Farley's face.

"Ah, I had forgotten," he muttered. "I would have trusted in my own strength alone."

Then, folding the child closer to him, he dropped upon his knee, raised his head, and murmured:

"Father in Heaven, protect us, two helpless children, aid me to leave this place and bring the guilty ones to justice."

The sound of hoarse laughter was heard outside as if in mockery to the boy's appeal, and a heavy step sounded on the stone floor.

"Tain't much he'll eat, but I'll offer it to him," Sturgis was heard to say. "He's got too much spunk altogether to suit me."

"Quick," whispered Harry, "lie down on this moss. They must not see you."

Florence lay upon the moss, and Harry hastily covered her up as Sturgis entered, bearing a jug of water and a tin pan on which was half a loaf of dry bread.

"I've brought yer supper," growled the man, as he placed the bread and water on the floor.

"You can leave them," said Harry, simply.

"Whenever you want to see Dick Watkins, I'm ready to take the word," said Sturgis.

"I do not want to see him, so you need not trouble yourself."

His chains were off, but Sturgis evidently considered him dangerous, for he kept at a distance.

"He won't stand no foolin', so you'd better make up yer mind," he growled.

"I have made up my mind, and I'll take the young girl with me or do well to do it alone in the long run."

"Don't you get too free, you fat fellow," said Sturgis, coming up to Harry, and pointing a revolver at his face. "If you do I'll shoot you quick as I look at you."

"I'm not afraid of you, you fat fellow."

"You ain't?" said Harry, letting the pistol drop to his side.

"Now, you there, you fat fellow."

out his arms. "Shoot and prove yourself the hound I have called you!"

The outlaw's face was livid with rage, but he could not meet the boy's unflinching gaze.

"Bah! no use wastin' time on yer," he muttered with an angry growl. "Dick Watkins'll attend to you, young feller, and yer'll be sorry ye didn't take my advice."

Then he dropped his weapon in his hip pocket and turned to leave.

In an instant, as soon as his back was turned, Harry sprang upon him, snatched the weapon from its place and hissed:

"Down on your knees! Dare to utter a sound and I'll blow your brains out!"

Sturgis fell upon his knees trembling with fear, while Harry covered him with the weapon.

"Florence," whispered the lad, "come, we must leave here at once."

The child threw off the covering of moss and sprang into Harry's arms.

"Remember, not a sound as you value your life!" hissed the boy.

Then he lifted the child with one arm and hurriedly retreated.

"Hello, Dick, an escape!" shouted Sturgis, springing to his feet.

Harry fired upon the instant, and Sturgis fell to the floor.

The boy dashed along the passage, passing some one on the way, reached the outer room of the old mission, and sprang out into the open air and the moonlight.

"What's the matter?" cried Dick Watkins, hurrying to the inner room.

"The young imp has escaped!" cried Sturgis, staggering to his feet, while the blood screamed over his shirt from a wound in his shoulder. "Hell me up with my own pistol."

"The fand take him!" hissed Dick.

"Took the kit, too," growled Sturgis, "and there goes a fortune."

"C'mon!" roared Watkins, drawing a revolver. "He can't have gone far, and he don't know the way."

The two rushed from the old ruin, down the path, and out into the moonlight.

Harry Farley was seen hurrying across the little bridge over the Devil's Mill Race.

Florence was clasped tightly in his arms, his face was uplifted as if in prayer, and as he sped on his lips seemed to move though no sound came from him.

Dick Watkins fired, the bullet passing within an inch of Harry's head.

In an instant the boy had crossed the bridge and disappeared in the shrubbery.

"C'mon!" hissed Watkins, rushing forward.

In his haste he did not look to see where he placed his feet, and as he reached the middle of the bridge, he suddenly slipped and fell.

He gripped the log with one hand and swung to and fro above the water, while a cry for help arose to his lips.

Sturgis rushed upon the bridge just as Harry fired at random.

The man struck the hand of Dick Watkins and dislodged it, while at the same moment he fell to his knees on the narrow bridge.

There was a shriek of agony as the body of the outlaw shot through the air and then struck the pool below.

In an instant it was whirled onward by the seething waters, drawn into the Devil's Mill Race, and borne out of sight forever.

Sturgis clung to the bridge above in an agony of fear, and dared not move an inch in either direction.

The moonlight, falling upon the seething waters of the pool, revealed no sign of the man who a moment before had fallen into its seething depths.

Harry had now reached the ground at the base of the rocks, and held Florence closer to his heart.

"Save me!" shrieked Sturgis, "or shoot me if ye're a man and put me out of my misery."

An instant's thought convinced the young fellow that as soon as Sturgis recovered his senses a little he could save himself.

"Save yourself, you treacherous dog!" he cried, and then he plunged into the woods, while the roar of the waters still sounded in his ears.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HALEY MEETS AN OLD FRIEND.

Harry had escaped from the outlaws, but his situation was not yet devoid of danger.

He was alone in the mountains, far from any human habitation, he was without money, and he had a delicate child to care for besides himself.

Pushing on through the woods, he soon came to a beaten path which he followed for some distance till he reached an opening, several acres in extent, and higher than the woods through which he had been traveling.

Crossing this he again struck into the woods, but could find no path, and was soon forced to come to a halt.

Gathering several armsful of dry leaves he made a bed for Florence, covered her up warmly, and sat beside her while she slept.

In the morning he shot a small bird with the revolver he had taken from Sturgis, but, having no fire and no means of making one, he was obliged to eat it raw.

Later in the day, however, he came upon the remains of a fire in a little clearing, the embers being still alive.

He soon kindled them into a blaze, threw on more wood and had a good fire going in a few minutes.

Leaving Florence to watch the fire, he went away and had the good fortune to shoot a rabbit which he brought back in triumph.

The nicely cooked on the hot coals, made their supper, washed down with water from a brook close at hand.

"Somebody has been here lately," remarked Harry, "or this fire would not have been here. It is quite likely, too, that that they will return. Well, if they are not outlaws like Watkins and Sturgis, I won't object."

No one appeared, however, and on the following morning Harry started off again, finding a path which led over a mountain, but as it was the only one to be seen, he thought it best to follow it.

By noon he had reached a point whence he could see the surrounding country for miles, and there, to the south, not more than two miles away, was a railroad, the smoke from the locomotive being seen wreathing in and out among the trees.

"A railroad!" he cried. "Then I shall find human beings at last. I could not stand many more days of this sort of life, and I fear that the poor child it nearly used up now."

Taking his bearings, the young fellow pushed on, following as straight a line as he could, for sometimes the path would disappear altogether, and he would be obliged to guide himself by his instinct.

At the end of five hours' hard traveling he suddenly came to the railroad, but could see no signs of a habitation in either direction.

"It must have been further than I thought," he mused, "and now here it is night and no sign of a house. I shall have to push on further, I suppose, and trust to good fortune."

Poor Florence was so worn out that Harry took her in his arms, and as he walked mile after mile along the track she fell asleep and forgot her troubles.

The moon arose, but still the brave fellow trudged on, half sleepless and half half-asleep, but persevering in the face of everything, hoping when to hope seemed vain.

At last he heard a rumble, which grew louder and louder, and then the shriek of an engine sounded in his ears, and he suddenly awoke to full consciousness.

Again he heard the shriek, and then the puff-puff of a locomotive slackening its speed, while the distant clang of a bell sounded clearly on the still air.

"There is a station; a train is stopping. I may be able to catch it in time," he muttered as he hurried on.

Presently he saw the glare of the headlight in front of him, and, as he ran forward, he saw that the engine of the burning train had, but only partially, cut through the men before it, and it was burning.

He listened anxiously for any sound that would tell him if, if all was well, he could run and run all the faster.

At last he reached a little platform, saw the station-house, and a man of pale countenance and tall, lean, and very exhausted.

He awoke, heard confused voices, and cried aloud: "Don't let the bad men get my Uncle Harry again. I know he has been carrying me all night."

He was in a condition of stupor, and then a tall form stepped forward, a face with white hair suddenly appearing in the darkness. It was Uncle Harry.

"I know what you think what I can't provide for you. I have the best of the best."

"Ye know 'em, do ye, pard?" asked a rough-looking man, who appeared to be a miner, coming up to the group.

"Know 'em! Waal, jee whizz! I should say I did! I've traveled nigh onter three thousand miles to find that boy, and if it hadn't a-been fur this dodratted stop, what I've been cussin' about, I'd 'a' missed him, and jee whizz! that'd been awful!"

"Oh, Mr. Snaggs, I'm so glad you've come!" cried Florence.

"So'm I—so'm I, little gal, more'n you think. Jee whizz! I'd ha' gin forty dollars jist naow to hev this old injine go faster, and now I'm durned if I care whether it goes or not. Here, yew, somebody, anybody, hev ye got any coffee or grub or suthin'? Pears tu me the boy is jist about petered out."

"Mebbe a little of the old stuff'd help him a mite, stranger," said the miner, offering a flask.

"Dassay it would—shouldn't wonder a bit. Jee whizz, colonel, yu're a friend in need and no dodgin'. Yu're the right sort."

Then, kneeling on the platform, Abner Snaggs lifted Harry's head and poured a few drops of the liquor down his throat.

In a few moments the boy revived, looked around, and seemed to be murmuring a prayer of thanksgiving.

"Waal, neow, that's suthin' like. Cheer up, young feller. Yu're a bit tuckered, but I'll pull ye through, jee whizz, I will."

"Mr. Snaggs!" cried Harry.

"Yas'r, Abner Snaggs, of South Mitchim, State o' Maine, and right durn glad I am tu see ye. Haow'd yu come here, where'd yu find the gal, how long yu been travelin'?"

"It's a long story, Mr. Snaggs, and—"

"Jee whizz! and yu're dead beat aout, and I'm gassin' away like an old woman, and forgettin' all the sense I ever hed. Here, my boy, there's a sort o' eatin'-house here, and I'll get yu suthin' tu put the sand in ye, if it costs all I got."

"But how came you to be here, Mr. Snaggs?" asked Harry, becoming inquisitor in his turn as Snaggs led him toward the house.

"Why, when I found you'd gone to Californy, and they said yu'd took the bank's money, I jest made up my mind that there was suthin' crooked in the business, and that you'd been got out o' the way to cover someone else's wickedness."

"You were right."

"So I took the fust train I could get and come a hootin', an' now here, when I expects to reach San Francisco in a few hours, along comes word that they's a train wrecked on the track about ten miles west, and that we'll have to wait."

"It was fortunate for me that there was," returned Harry.

"Jee whiz! yu may well say so. But haow did yu git here? Thought yu was in San Francisco."

"I was, but I fell in with my enemies, Dick Watkins and a pal of his called Sturgis. Watkins stole Florence and Sturgis drugged me, and carried me to a den of his in the mountains."

"Dick Watkins, hey? Yes, I know the critter. Used tu be a fisherman, chum o' Richard Norman's, and no account. By the way, yu didn't know that Sydney Heaton and Richard Norman was—"

"O, no, on? Ye I know that he was."

"I wot! Well, where's Watkin's?"

"Dad!"

"Yu don't say! Waal, waal, yu'll hev time tu tell me all ab'ut it, fur I'm going East agin by the fust train that comes along, and you're goin' with me, and then, if we don't make it hot for somebody, my name ain't Abner Snaggs, of South Mitchim, State o' Maine."

"My name must be cleared, my sister's child acknowledged, and the guilty punished," said Harry, gravely.

"And so they will be, but jist naow yu'd better eat and drink something, and get braced up. I tell yu, it was Providence fetched me here, and jee whizz, if I wasn't deacon of a congregational church already I'd jine it to-night, jee whizz! I would!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RETURN OF THE WANDERERS.

One pleasant day in the fall of the year three persons arrived in the city of New York from San Francisco.

One was an old man with a kind face, but eccentric habits, the second was a handsome, well-dressed young fellow of twenty-two or twenty-three, and the third was a pretty little child of seven or eight.

"Waal, jee whizz! here we are in York again," exclaimed the old gentleman, as he stepped off the cars, the young fellow leading the child from the platform to the ground, for she was tired.

"Yes, and it is a mercy that I am here," returned the young man.

"O, Uncle Harry," cried the child, "hull I see Mrs. Strauss and Hans and Peter and Gretchen again? Won't they be glad!"

"Yes, dear, and they will be glad to see you again as well." "Jee whizz! if it wasn't fur separating ye from her, durned if I wouldn't take her back to South Mitchim with me; but I jist would ruther go inter business here in York, and yu'll want her with ye, o' course."

"You are very kind, Mr. Snaggs. Perhaps when I take a vacation I will visit South Mitchim and take Florence with me."

"Jee whizz! that'll be jist paine," laughed Abner. "Wha' ya want a yellow? You'd think they was a pile of Injins! I tell ya, ya would, jee whizz!"

"It's only the children looking for fare," said Harry, with a smile.

The party had reached the street, and the world of noise of civilization around a great railroad station now entered.

"Jee whizz! I denko when I've rid in a coach," chuckled Abner. "I'll all go down together an' surprise the Dutchman. Gosh, he hain't hev a car to stop in his place in town."

"I will be ever, if any rate," said Harry, "thatch I am not too proud to ride in the street cars."

"Nah, man, I jee whizz' an' I didn't hev to ride on a streetcar, an' I denko I jist did the right thing."

airs once in a while, and this 'ere is one of them times. Come on, and hang the cost."

Harry called a cab and helped Florence in, Abner following, while Harry told the driver where to go.

As they left the station a showily-dressed woman passed them on the way to the waiting-room.

She stared, turned her head, gazed fixedly at the occupants of the carriage, and then went on.

"Young Farley returned, eh?" she mused, "and the child with him. Then Dick's scheme must have failed. Well, if the child is here again, there is money to be made out of Mr. Sydney Heaton. I wonder if I couldn't make it myself."

"The boy will want to avenge himself, and I might help him do it; but then there wouldn't be so much money for me in it. No, I think I will play my own game."

"He will probably take the brat to his friend, downtown, where she was before, while he is looking for work, for it isn't likely he will go back to the bank, and it will be safe enough for me to look for her there."

"Once she is in my possession I can bleed Sydney Heaton afresh, and make him either pay me so much a month to keep the girl out of sight, or a good lump sum to get her out of the way at once."

"I think I will make him a proposal of that kind, but not until I have the child safe. Young Farley refused my help once; now let him get along without it."

Mrs. Pritchard had gone to the station in search of a victim, for the sharpers in a great city are not all men by any means, but now that she had seen Harry she determined to give her whole attention to this new affair.

Kate was by no means averse to picking pockets, robbing green country girls or shoplifting on occasion, but the present business promised larger returns and less risk, and she was therefore quite ready to follow it up.

She merely glanced in at the different waiting-rooms as though looking for a friend, and seeing only a few persons there and none of them likely to be good subjects for her wiles, returned to her flat to lay her plans.

Meanwhile Harry, Florence, and Abner Snaggs were on their way downtown, thinking of the surprise they had in store for Fritz Strauss.

They reached the store in half an hour, and found Fritz trying a pair of shoes on a big Irish woman.

As they entered he looked around, sprang up, rushed forward and cried:

"Ach, chinnedies, Mr. Snaggs, vas dot yourselluf? Vell, vell, Harry, my poy, I was glad to sawn you back, and der leedle kind, too, already. Mein craciousness, you look fine. Mary Ann, my dear, come into der shop once, here was somebody you was glat to see. Peter, Hans, Yawcob, go tolz your moder to nefer mint dot corn beef und cabbage, aber to come right away once mit der shop and sawn her friends."

The good German was terribly excited, shaking first the hand of one and then the other of his guests, and alternately laughing and crying.

"Peter, you know I am right, and I am right, Mr. Snaggs," cried the good Fritz, "but you know that you don't know."

day wid one new shoe an me fut, and the other getting cowld for want av company."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Ryan," said Fritz, "I was busy. I make you a bresent off does shoes off you put dem on yourself once."

"Ye'll do nothing av the sort," said Mrs. Strauss, who came in just in time to hear the last words. "As ye are busy I'll fit the lady me— Oh, wurra! It's Misther Harry and the darlin' choild, so it is!"

She had no time to try on shoes after recognizing Harry and Florence.

She kissed them both several times, shook hands with Abner till he thought he would have a fit, and became as excited as her husband.

"Faix, I don't know but I'll have to accept yer offer, Mr. Strauss, and put the shoes on meself," said Mrs. Ryan, who was growing tired of waiting.

"Won minyute, me good woman," cried the shoe-dealer's wife. "Sure, yez can appreciate the situation, I think. The young man and the little glrrul do be just come back from California, where we thought they wor dead, and so it's no wondher we're glad to see them, though the poor darlint is bloind herself, and can't see us."

"Oh, the poor crather," said Mrs. Ryan, beginning to sob. "This is the Mi. I don't like to see the poor. I know phwat it is to meet me frinds asther a long parting, so I do, and I can sympathoize wid ye."

Then the good woman wiped her eyes on the corner of her shawl, and forgot that she had on but one shoe, for she sprang up in her turn, kissed both Harry and Florence, and would have done the same to Snaggs had he not exclaimed:

"Jee whizz, my good woman, I hain't got the least objection to ye kissing me, but my Polly wouldn't like it, and so, if it's all the same to you, I guess I'll shake hands."

The affair was thus arranged, and then Fritz's son came in, and fitted Mrs. Ryan to her entire satisfaction, which was further increased when Fritz took half-a-dollar from the price of the shoes.

Then they all retired to the sitting-room behind the shop, leaving Hans to attend to possible customers, while they all talked a once and had the best of times.

"Yez must all shtay to supper," said Mrs. Strauss. "I couldnt think av lettin' ye go to-night. Strauss and meself can shtay in the shtore, the byes can bunk together, and there'll be plenty av room and a hairy welkim for yez all."

"We will stay to supper, Mrs. Strauss," said Harry. "But we must not tax your hospitality too severely. Florence will be off to see Master Harry, and I have to go to a hotel and remain here in the morning."

"Well, I suppose Master Harry, though it's yerself knows whereof you speak, a week if yez looked."

"You are right, and a man off the road kin have a week if he wants it."

"I'll be off to see Master Harry, I'll go and I'll see Master Harry. It's a very bad, bad man. I know it, you can't be too careful to it as it's a man that's Waller-A-term."

The dinner that evening was the best that Mrs. Strauss could provide.

There was a big joint of meat, smoking hot, a huge dish of boiled cabbage just steaming from the pot, a great pyramid of mealy potatoes, a tray full of white bread, flanked by a big pot of golden butter, coffee enough for all, and a great apple pie, baked in a deep dish, with no crust on the bottom, a luxury imported direct from Ireland by the happy housewife.

There was a royal welcome to all, besides, and not one of the merry party felt a pang of regret.

There were Fritz and his wife, three sons, and two daughters, Harry, Florence, and Snaggs, and there would have been room for more if they had been there.

Fritz and Snaggs kept the table in a roar with their comical remarks, and Mrs. Strauss was not far behind them on the brilliance of her repartee, while Harry thrilled them all with the recital of his adventures in California.

At last the meal was over, and Fritz, Snaggs, and Harry enjoyed their cigars in the sitting room, while Mrs. Strauss and her eldest daughter cleared away the table.

Florence and little Peter Strauss, a youngster of her own age, remained in the store to give warning if customers came, although none were expected at this hour.

It was nearly eight o'clock, and nearly dark, when Gretchen, a girl of ten, came into the store, and suggested to Peter that they play a game of hide-and-seek for Florence's amusement.

Although deprived of the sense of sight, Florence was unusually quick in the others, and she herself challenged her young companions to hide anywhere in the store, promising to be able to find them.

This would be rare sport, for the children were skeptical, and wanted to see if Florence could find them.

They hid themselves, and Peter called out that they were ready, when Florence went directly to the place where he was concealed, and brought him out amid great laughter.

"You don't could find Gretchen," said the boy. "You hear me holler, und dot was der way you find me oud once."

"Hide again and say nothing," laughed Florence, "and I will find you."

Then she sat on a bench near the door, giving Peter time to hide until she counted one hundred.

The boy hid himself behind a chest in the further part of the store, and kept as still as a mouse.

Suddenly he heard a scream of alarm from Florence, and sprang out of his hiding place.

A strange woman, dressed in black and wearing a veil over her face, was just leaving the store with a small child in her arms.

"Uncle Harry! Grandpa Snaggs, help!" she screamed. "The bad, naughty woman is—"

The abductor clapped a handkerchief over the child's face and hurried away, just as Gretchen came from her hiding place.

"Run after her woman! Gretchen!" cried Peter, and away she went. I go tell father and Harry."

A moment later he burst into the sitting room.

"Fader, fader, a bad wicked womans yust now runs away mit Florence, und go out mit der street."

"My God! the child is stolen!" cried Harry, springing to his feet and seizing his hat. "A woman, you say? Guess it must be Mrs. Pritchard and no one else."

He was in the street in a moment, followed by Fritz and Abner.

"Dere she was, down by dot Fulton Ferry!" cried Gretchen, who had been nearly overthrown by Harry. "I see her went dat way yust now."

"The ferry!" gasped Harry. "Come, we must not lose an instant."

In a few minutes the three pursuers reached the ferry, but neither the woman nor the child was to be seen.

CHAPTER XX.

A RIVER OF FIRE.

For a moment it seemed as if pursuit had been baffled.

Then Fritz saw the Irish policeman Tim, with whom he was well acquainted, approaching.

Fritz hurried up to him and asked breathlessly:

"Goot evening, Tim. Vas you sAWN a womans und a child so along dis way yust now?"

"I did, sir, and she wer carrying the child. She said it wor sick, but it seemed to me as if it wor the wan that I used to see playin' wid yer childher."

"How was the woman dressed?" asked Harry.

"All in black, sir, wid a black thing over her face phwat hid it intirely."

"The child has been stolen," said Harry, "and the woman is Mrs. Pritchard, a blackmailer and thief."

"Ajax, she won't get away from me, thin," cried Tom, and he ran back with the rest.

At the Catherine ferry nothing had been seen of the woman, and the search was continued.

At the next street one of the ferry ticket-takers said that a woman in black and closely veiled, carrying an unconscious child, had passed through only a few minutes before.

"She's in that in the slip now," cried Harry, throwing down his coat. "We may catch it yet. Come!"

They hurried through, but just before they reached the gates the men were dimmed in their faces.

"It's us through!" cried Harry, shaking the gate. "There's a woman in that that has stolen a child."

"Take the next boat," said the man stiffly. "I'll give you fifty dollars to open the gate."

"I'll give you the rest," and the man went away.

"I'll give you a hundred!" cried Harry.

"It's all right, Johnson!" called out the man in the ticket booth, "you can go through."

The gate was open, but it was now too late. The two men left the slip, and moving on into the

"Too late!" muttered Harry. "Stop! she shall not escape me!"

Hurrying back to the box he asked:

"Is there any way to telegraph to those on the other side, and have the woman arrested?"

"There's a telegraph office on the New Haven pier next to this."

"Wait here a moment," said Harry, as he ran off.

At the telegraph office he sent a dispatch to the ferry master at the foot of Broadway, eastern district of Brooklyn, to detain a woman arriving by the ferryboat Alaska, leaving New York at ten minutes to eight.

Then he returned to the ferry-house and took the next boat, leaving a few minutes after eight.

"I hope we may be in time," he said to Abner, as they all stood on the forward part of the boat looking out upon the river.

"Jee whizz! I'd given five hundred dollars to caught that 'ere boat!" growled Abner. "If we don't get the little gal away I shan't dare to face my Polly never again, I shan't, jee whizz!"

The boat made good speed until nearly across the river, when she was delayed by a string of canal boats moving downstream in the wake of a tugboat.

The delay lasted ten minutes, and Harry was in an agony of suspense, while Snaggs fretted and fumed, and gave expression to his disgust in most forcible language.

"Mein chiminies, off ve don't was been in a hurry," muttered Fritz, "der boat just go like der dooce, aber we was vant to go gwick und she go just like a snail once."

"It's all right," said Harry. "The woman will be detained till we reach there."

He tried to assure himself that such would be the case, but doubts assailed him, and he wished devoutly that they were on shore.

They landed at last, and Harry went at once to the offices to make inquiries.

"We saw the woman," said the gentleman in charge, "and tried to detain her, but she defied us and said we had no authority to arrest her without a warrant."

"Were there no officers around?" asked Harry.

"Yes, but the woman terrorized them. She said the child would die if she did not get medical aid and that—"

"In short, you allowed her to escape?" interrupted Harry, impatiently.

"We could not do otherwise."

"How long ago was this?"

"Not five minutes."

"Did you see which way she went?"

"Toward Greenpoint."

"But for that delay on the river, we would have been in time," sighed Harry.

"Come, we will search the river front and send out a general alarm. God grant that we may not be too late."

They could not tell whether the woman had taken a car, or if she had stopped somewhere on the route, but they felt that she could not be far away, and that a chain of officers would quickly catch her in the city.

They presently reached a place where there were few houses, the majority of the buildings being mostly stores and factories, with here and there an occasional drinking place.

It was now quite dark, but, as Harry and his friends paused under a street lamp to look about, a woman was seen to leave a saloon three or four hundred feet ahead of them, cross the street rapidly, and enter a yard where there were a lot of sheds piled high with oil barrels.

There was an oil works next to the yard, and its own dock was right upon the water.

"Dere she is now!" cried Fritz.

The three friends hastened after her, and Harry, who was in advance, reached the fence just as a gate was shut in his face.

There was a sharp click, and the young fellow knew that the gate had been locked.

"Stop!" he cried. "We know you, and the police are on your track."

"I care neither for you nor them," answered the woman, hurrying away. "I shall defeat you yet."

"How much do you demand for the child's ransom?" cried Harry.

"More than you can pay!" hissed Kate, whom Harry had recognized by her voice. "If you meddle further in my affairs you will never see her again."

Then she hurried away and disappeared behind a shed which seemed to be empty.

At that moment Fritz and Abner came up.

"Run for a policeman, Mr. Snaggs!" cried Harry. "Fritz, there is another gate further down. Go to it and stop the woman's escape."

"Ya! I bet you!" cried Fritz, as he hurried away.

At that moment a tongue of flame appeared above the yard fence.

"Fritz!" cried Harry.

The fire spread with the rapidity of lightning, and by their light Harry could see the woman hurrying away.

He was alone.

"My God! she has set fire to the sheds and left the poor child to perish."

Then he clambered upon the fence by the crook of it, and reached the top.

In an instant he had dropped to the ground on the other side.

Kate Pritchard had not purposely fired the shed.

When she came from the saloon she brought a piece of candle with her and this she lighted as she reached the shed.

She held it over the fire a few moments before, intending to drop the burning candle so that she would not be recognized, and then she made her way along the docks.

Her course led from the top of the dock which she had crossed, down the side of the pier, and then across the water to the opposite side.

The child was in the boat now, and the two girls, Kate and Florence, were seated in it.

For a moment they gazed at the fire, and then the child

In an instant the fire had run up the side and burst out at the roof.

The wind fanned the flames and instantly the shed was a mass of fire.

Kate uttered a hoarse cry and hurried away, leaving Florence alone.

Almost before one could think the fire had been communicated to an oil tank, twenty feet away.

"Fire!" screamed Harry, and the cry was taken up from the street.

He dashed forward, pulling off his coat as he ran, and in a few seconds he reached the shed.

"Florence!" he cried, in an agony of despair.

"Uncle Harry!" cried the child, rushing into his arms.

Kate had disappeared, but Harry cared nothing for her now.

He threw his coat around the thinly-clad form of the child, and hurried from the dangerous locality.

Between him and the street there was now a wall of fire. Safety lay in the direction of the river, and only there.

The flames were spreading along the ground and overhead. The river was his only refuge.

It was his intention to plunge into the stream and let the current out of danger.

When he reached the end of the pier, however, he saw a boat containing a pair of oars moored just beneath him.

To spring aboard and cast off was the work of a moment. Seizing the oars he pulled out into the stream.

At that moment there was a loud report.

The oil tank had exploded.

Instantly the burning oil poured out in a flood of living fire. It rushed across the pier and fell upon the water.

A cloud of stifling smoke and steam arose, but the oil was not extinguished.

Instead it converted the water into a river of fire.

The burning flood poured into the river and the waters were now all afire.

"My God!" cried Harry, as he strained every nerve, "what can save me now?"

The burning oil spread rapidly over the water, chasing the boat as though determined upon its destruction.

If once that fiery flood reached him the boy was lost.

"Oh, Uncle Harry," cried Florence, "it is burning hot and the smoke chokes me. Where are we?"

"On a river of fire!" whispered the boy. "God alone can save us."

He tugged at the oars, making the boat fairly fly over the waters, but faster and faster yet came that stream of fire and death stared him in the face.

His clothes were scorched with the awful heat, the glare of the flames blinded him, the waves were all afire behind him, and on one side, but he rowed as he never had rowed, and the other as he put his strength upon it.

It was not his own life that he thought of; the child was far more precious, and he would have died that he might save her.

The boat dashed through the turbulent stream, and

a word, clasped her hands together, and prayed for Harry's safety, not her own.

The boy, placing over his shoulder, saw her, and a new courage inspired him.

The flames had reached the stern of the boat, and were leaping the sides, but there was still a glimmer of hope.

"I will save her now!" he hissed, "if I must cross an ocean of flames! God give me strength to fulfil the task!"

CHAPTER XXI.

OUT OF THE FIRE.

Never before had Harry Parley been in such peril of his life. The water, all astir with the burning oil, pursued him relentlessly.

All around him the river was on fire.

Great masses of burning oil ran from the blades of his oars, leaped upon the gunwale, they gathered around the bow, hissed over the stern.

He was in a river of fire and, row as he would, he seemed unable to escape.

On toward midstream he rowed, hoping to distance the burning current.

As he shot into midchannel he realized that a change had taken place.

The current had been going downstream when he embarked on his boat.

It was now running upstream, and he was saved.

The flames and smoke were carried away from him, for he was pulled against the stream instead of with it.

The tide had turned, and the struggle was over.

The floating oil now went up the river instead of down, and the danger had passed.

Harry watched the awful sight in silence as he pulled for the New York side, the burning oil-works throwing a bright glare upon the water, the flame-tipped waves increasing the weird effect.

It was impossible to land at any point near the fire, and Harry resolved to go at once to New York and communicate with his friends.

"I didn't know you'd have seen me when I took the boat," he said, "or certainly when I was racing with the fire, and they will return at once. However, suppose they did not reach the wharf in time, they must think that I have perished, and will remain on the spot until all hope of my being alive has gone. I cannot return by way of the river, but I can wait until the moment I reach New York that I am safe."

The current was running strong and he was forced to bear over toward the New York side in order to make any headway against it.

The river was very turbulent, however, the more speed he gained, the faster he tended, well up-town, but at last he reached a point at the end of a pier, he pulled his boat up to the bank, laid it flat, and lay down.

Taking a car of the Belt line, he went at once to the house of Fritz Strauss, where Mrs. Strauss was anxiously awaiting the arrival of someone.

It was long after eleven o'clock, but the store was lighted up as usual, Mrs. Strauss being afraid to close.

"Oh, begorrah, is it ye at last, Masther Harry?" she exclaimed, when Harry entered, "and the choild, too, thank the saints! But phwhativer have yez been doin'? Sure, the shirt is nearly burned off yer back, and yer face and hands look like biled lobsters."

Harry related his adventures briefly, and then said:

"You have heard nothing of Fritz or Mr. Snaggs?"

"No, faix, but I know that—"

"Jee whizz, Fritz! there he is now!" Abner was heard to say at that moment. "Told ye he'd be here. The feller on the ferryboat what said he seen the boy was right, arter all."

"Ya, I tink so myselluf," answered Fritz, coming in with Abner. "How you was, Harry? Chiminies, dot was a fire once! I beirned my whitzkers off mein face, und Sniggs, he was putty vell bald-headed mit dem blazes."

"Did you see the woman, Mrs. Pritchard, after the fire?"

"Nein; I don't saw dot womans. Maybe she was beirn up."

"I am afraid so, although she may have escaped."

"And sarve her right if she did burn up," said Abner.

"No, I cannot say that," returned Harry. "Bad as she was, I would not wish her such a fate."

"Waal, you're safe, anyhow, and so is Florence, and if the woman got away it's more'n she deserved; but it's quite likely that she's burned to a cinder. The works was burned up, and the docks was all cleared away, and a lot o' vessels with 'em, and for a spell there was the old scratch to pay. It wasn't all over when we came away, but the wust of it was."

"Sure, yez can't think of going away the night," said Mrs. Strauss. "It's nearly midnight. Come into the sittin'-room and make yerself easy. Go run for a pitcher av beer, Fritz, before Geldmacher shuts up, and I'll shut up here while ye're gone."

It was nearly morning before the elder members of the party retired, for the adventures of the night had to be discussed, and Mrs. Strauss made acquainted with all the particulars before she would rest.

In the morning Harry went to the bank where he kept his own savings, drew out enough to meet his immediate needs, and took rooms in a different part of the city from where he had lived.

The banking house of Maberly, Heaton & Co. was reported to be in good financial condition once more, and Sydney Heaton was one of the pets of society.

Harry did not mind that so long as he could go and make restitution to the bank, and to have gone to some foreign country where he would endeavor to lead a new life.

He also heard that Sydney Heaton was to give a reception to his friends on a certain night, before the wedding of his wife, and that the best families of New York would be present.

"Sydney Heaton must remove the stain which is on his character, and to do this he must go to Europe and make the acquaintance of the best people in the world."

refuses then I will denounce him to the world as a scoundrel." Harry had determined to attend the reception of Heaton's, and in the meantime he made his preparations.

On the night of the birthday fete Sydney Heaton's spacious residence was aglow with lights, and everywhere scenes of enchantment presented themselves.

The conservatory was a marvel of beauty, the drawing-room was like a hall in some fairy palace, and from top to bottom of the house all was gaiety.

There was another person besides Harry Farley who, although not invited to the fete, had determined to be present.

This was the woman known as Kate Pritchard.

Fortune had not dealt as well by her as she could wish, and she was sadly in need of funds.

She had escaped in the very nick, at the time of the fire at Greenpoint, and supposed, with others, that Harry and the child had perished.

With the death of the child and the absence of documentary evidence, Watkins having stolen her papers, Kate's chances of getting money out of Heaton seemed small.

The woman was bold, however, and would not hesitate to push her claim, even if she had nothing to substantiate it.

She had obtained money from Heaton before, and was resolved to do so again, knowing his weak side, and that he would pay anything rather than be exposed.

There was another side to the case, however, and this seemed to offer greater advantages.

Instead of bleeding Heaton, she would appeal directly to the wife, who had more money than Heaton, and more at stake, society compelling woman to keep her reputation more unsullied than a man need to.

The fete had nearly reached its height when a servant handed Blanche a letter, saying that the writer was waiting for an answer.

The letter was in a feminine handwriting, and ran as follows:

"Madame.—I am in possession of secrets which concern your name and that of your husband. If you think it's worth anything to you, please grant me an interview.—A Friend."

"What can this mean?" thought Blanche. "No friend would dare call me by such a name."

"Is there any answer?" asked the servant.

"No," said Blanche, haughtily. "Tell the person who gave you this that I have nothing to say."

In the meantime Heaton had gone to the conservatory to sit a rest of a few minutes, and compose his nerves.

Notwithstanding his success, he could not prevent a guilty feeling from troubling over him at times, and low, surrounded by every luxury and flattered by friends, there was a sensation of emptiness in his heart, and he desired to be alone.

He had been in the conservatory but a few moments when he became aware of the letter.

"All right, my boy," said the old man, "this is a night of revels, I suppose?"

"I suppose you think so," returned Sydney, carelessly.

"Why, what have you to fear? A fortunate rise in stocks has enabled me to pay my indebtedness to you and leave me far in advance myself; no one suspects any wrong, young Farley is dead, in all probability, and we are both on the high road to fortune."

"I am not satisfied that young Farley is dead. He may turn up at any moment."

"Nonsense! Your man out West would prevent that."

"I have heard nothing from Watkins since he went away, nor from his associate. My letters to them have been returned, and I am in as much uncertainty as ever."

"Oh, well, I suppose they killed the boy and are afraid to show themselves. You had nothing to do with that, so you need not be uneasy."

"But I am uneasy and you ought to be, as well."

"I?" said old Heaton in a surprised tone.

"Yes, you. I suppose you remember that you put a name other than your own to certain notes of hand not long ago."

"I'm, yes; I may have been indiscreet in that respect, Sydney, but it is all right; the notes have all been taken up and destroyed."

"Excuse me, they have not all been taken up. One for five thousand dollars is in the hands of a broker in this city. I have just learned this to-night."

"Oh, well," answered the other, "old Maberly is so erratic, so peculiar that he can't swear whether he signed it or not; and anyhow I suppose we can buy the paper up?"

"We might if it was the only one, but since your last attempt in that line you have been repeating the offense."

"How do you know this?" demanded the other, turning pale.

"I know it, and that is sufficient. You promised me after young Farley went away that there would be no more of this business. You have not kept your word."

"Oh, well, the whole of them don't amount to much. I can pay them off easily enough."

"But suppose someone else presents them for discount? Discovery must follow at last."

"Oh, you are exciting yourself needlessly," said the old rascal, in a tone meant to be bantering. "Come, you must rejoin your guests, or your absence will be noticed."

The two men went off arm-in-arm, and a moment later a figure in black stepped from behind a huge cluster of palms.

"So, that was worth hearing," mused Kate to herself the listener. "It ought to be worth something, even if my lady does refuse to see me. Ha! she must have repented of her hasty decision, for here she comes."

At that moment Blanche entered the conservatory in search of her husband.

"You have come to grant me an interview, I presume?" said Kate, as Blanche started.

"Then you are the author of the note I received just now."

"Yes."

"I told you I had nothing to say."

"I think you have," returned Kate with a smile in her eyes. "Are you aware that your husband has another wife living at the time of your marriage?"

Old Heaton had suddenly disappeared, but it was not that which caused Blanche to pause.

It was a sudden exclamation from Abner Snaggs.

"Beg pardon, ma'am, but something seems wrong," he suddenly cried, pointing to Sydney Heaton.

The man had been sitting motionless for some minutes, but a peculiar look upon his face had attracted Abner's attention.

Blanche and Harry sprang to his side, and Abner attempted to raise his head.

It fell back the moment it was released, and a red spot on the man's shirt bosom and the rigid look of the features told only too plain a tale.

Sydney Heaton was dead.

Vengeance had overtaken him at last.

"Dead!" muttered Blanche. "Well, perhaps it is better so. But I could never have wished it."

The guests were dismissed, and none of them ever knew what had really happened in the conservatory that night.

Sydney Heaton was buried without the least pomp or ostentation, and his secret was buried with him, only the few persons present at the grave knowing the truth.

Old Mr. Heaton disappeared from the city on the day following the reception, and it was reported that he had gone to Europe for his health.

Mr. Maberly paid off the forged notes, and there was no scandal, no sensational news of any kind, for Blanche was to be considered, and any rumor that reflected unfavorably upon either of the Heatons would injure her.

The old scoundrel and hypocrite, who had been the cause of all his son's trouble, remained absent, and to this day has not reappeared.

Hate Fit Hartie went away, leaving no desire to figure in the police-court, nothing has since been heard of her.

Abner Snaggs went to South Portland, Maine, in a few days, back to New York, and always calls on his old friend, Mrs. Hartie, who still continues to live at the old stand, and in a fair way of getting, with a fortune.

True to her promise Blanche became a mother to little Florence, and gave the child all the love and tenderness she could bestow.

It was indeed a happy day, when, a year later, Florence was able to look upon whom she loved, and to know that the darkness in which she had lived so long would never return.

She is now a beautiful young lady, and no one who sees her life and hears her merry laugh would ever dream that formerly she had been such a sad one.

She is still a favorite with the Heatons, Harry is with her, and little Florence is the joy of the house, and the delight to the old parents of the old man and woman.

The affairs of the bank were in time relieved from the confused state into which they had fallen, and to-day Harry Farley is at the head of the establishment, representing the interests of Blanche, and himself making an excellent living by his strict attention to business.

Rube Sturgis never appeared in the East and no search was made for him in the West, and his share of the knowledge of the crimes of the Heatons, and the plot against Harry Farley has never brought him in a dollar so far that we know, and it is not likely that they ever will.

Harry Farley's day of triumph came at last, and now, blessed with health, wealth, a host of friends, and the love of those dear to him, he looks forward hopefully to the future, and has no regret for the past when he was engaged in a bitter fight against the world, and when fate sent him to the help of those he loved, *Out In the Streets*.

THE END.

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